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HOW TO IDENTIFY PERSIAN RUGS

HOW TO IDENTIFY PERSIAN RUGS

A TEXT-BOOK FOR COLLECTORS AND STUDENTS

BY

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PREFACE

INSTRUCTION, rather than discussion, is the keynote of the author's treatment of his subject in this manual, and he makes no apologies, therefore, for confining himself closely to facts, at the expense of theories and the interesting, though more irrelevant, details of history, of geography, and of travel.

He aims at both simply and speedily placing within the grasp of his readers a thorough knowledge of such facts as are necessary to enable them to identify any typical specimens of the better-known classes of Persian Rugs, and to classify them, with regard to their age, their merit, and their value.

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HOW TO IDENTIFY PERSIAN RUGS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A SIMPLE and comprehensive system, devised for the identification of specimens submitted to our judgment, might conveniently be arranged to proceed upon two main lines of investigation, the first being based upon a study of the more general details of colour and design, and the second, upon an examination of the more particular and technical details of weave and of finish.

Each investigation is in its own way of equal importance, and either may lead us at a glance to the solution of our problem, at times how easily, may be judged of, from the following illustrations :—

A friend has bought two Persian (?) rugs,

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE I

A SPECIMEN PERSIAN RUG

Few pieces could better illustrate Persian ideals. Floral forms, flowers in rows, flowering shrubs, flowers on stalks, and foliage, such we shall learn are the motives characteristic of the weavings of Iran. The Field pattern consists of a profusion of flower and tree forms, amongst which we can distinguish sunflowers, lilies, weeping willows, and others, all most beautifully and realistically drawn. The Border is in its own way as characteristic of Persian traditions as the Field, and the Border stripes—seven in number in this instance—all exhibit patterns of a floral type, whilst from only one of them, the Main stripe, is that hall-mark of Persian authorship, the “Vine Meander” (see Chap. VI., p. 91), missing. In this rug we shall find no undecorated spaces of plain colour, and no labour-savers, since these are evidences of a later commercial age, whilst this is a grand old specimen typical of the workmanship of the eighteenth century and earlier, and consequently displaying perhaps the most characteristic feature of its times, namely, a beautiful and elaborate pattern, beautifully and elaborately drawn.

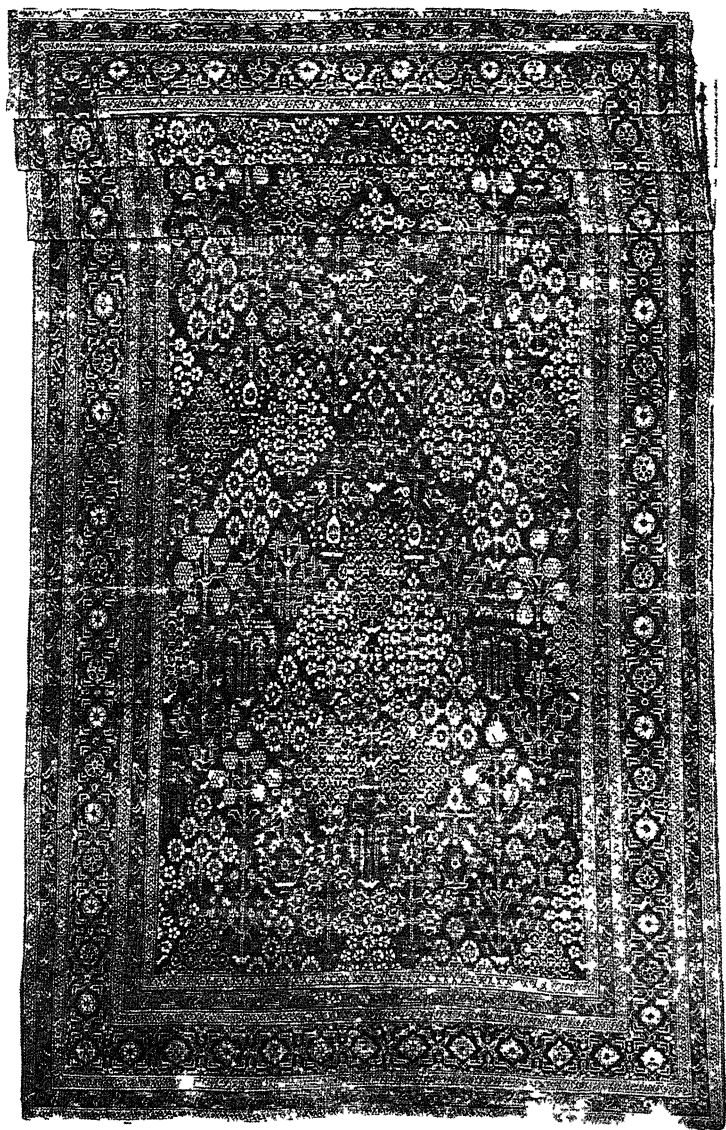


PLATE I A SPECIMEN PERSIAN RUG.

INTRODUCTION

and wishes for our opinion regarding them. Rug No. 1 is small, the Field is covered with the well-known "Herati" * pattern, the Border shows a simple floral design, the colours are rich and subdued ; we see at once that it is Persian, it could be nothing else, but its local district of origin remains still to be settled. We turn it over face downwards (noting, as we do so, the extreme thinness and flexibility of our specimen), so that we may examine the back, which, upon inspection, reveals a close and fine-grained weave, with the weft † crossing but once between each row of knots ; it is enough, this is one of the famous "Sehna" ‡ rugs from the Sehna district of Persia, there could be no possible mistake about it now.

Rug No. 2 displays a central field of faded peach colour, upon which are scattered various small designs worked in yellow, brown, and white, and surrounding a central medallion of rounded form ; the colouring is Chinese,

* "Herati" pattern described and illustrated, p. 15, Chap. III. (Patterns and Designs).

† See Weft, p. 28, Chap. IV. (Details of Weave and Finish).

‡ See Sehna Rugs, p. 75, Chap. V. (Type Analysis).

PERSIAN RUGS

the design a mixture of Chinese and Persian ; it is unnecessary to examine further, at our first glance we knew it ; not Persia was its home, but ancient Samarkand in Chinese Turkestan.

Without a knowledge of its technical peculiarities of weave we should less surely and less easily have recognised our Sehna, without a study of colour and design we should have been at a loss to identify our Samarkand, and to distinguish it from the rugs of China proper.

The story of colours and patterns is fully told, and the variations of weave and of finish discussed in detail, in subsequent chapters devoted to these subjects, and for the moment, satisfied with this mere indication of the lines upon which our learning will progress, we shall pass direct to our first real lesson, which is designed to teach us how best to learn to recognise the rug woven in Persia from every other rug of the East, and will lead us, incidentally, to a short discussion of the principal characteristics of the remaining five well-defined groups of Oriental rugs, to-day known and recognised.

CHAPTER II

PERSIAN RUGS COMPARED WITH THOSE OF OTHER GROUPS

THE Eastern rug world of to-day is conveniently regarded as consisting of six main groups or divisions, as follows :—

1. China,
2. Central Asia,
3. Caucasia,
4. Persia,
5. Turkey,
6. India,

and it will be both helpful and interesting to the student to have some general knowledge of all these groups, particularly in regard to those characteristics which differentiate them from each other, and especially from the rugs of Persia. The above system of grouping is in the main geographically correct, but we

PERSIAN RUGS

must notice that there are certain exceptions to this (about six in number), instances in which the claims of history and the source of inspiration of the weaver, have been regarded as the factors of paramount importance. Such instances occur when, as here, we include under the heading of China the rugs of Samarkand, and regard as Persian the weavings of Bijars, of Herat, and of Mosul.

1. Chinese Rugs.—These can be dismissed in a few words, and will give but little trouble, since their colours, colour-schemes, and designs resemble those of no other group, and are so characteristic as to be recognised in a moment. Yellows predominate, whilst their reds, peach, plum, and pomegranate, are shades found in no other rugs, and their designs, the Swastika,* the Key,* the Fret, Emblems, Dragons, Bats, and Butterflies, are here seen, but nowhere else. Medallions when present are rounded, in place of the usual diamond shape.

2. Central Asian.—These rugs are very

* For description, see p. 22, Chap. III. (Patterns and Designs).

COMPARISONS

distinctive on account of their characteristic patterns and their peculiar colour scheme, which produces its beautiful effect, not by the usual contrasting of colours, but by the domination of a single one. Their colours, which are rich and subdued, consist principally of varying shades of red, terra-cottas, maroons, and browns, whilst their patterns (never floral) are formed by some geometrical design, such as a diamond, hexagon, or octagon, repeated in rows throughout the Field.

The central medallion, so commonly encountered in the rugs of other groups, is not met with here.

The weavers employ the "Sehna" knot,* and commonly finish their sides with an "Overcasting," † or "Double-Overcasting," † of two or more cords; whilst of all the rugs with long end-webs and fantastic fringes, none are found outside this group.

3. **Caucasian Rugs.**—The colours of these rugs are lighter, brighter, and not always harmonious, whilst their patterns are invariably

* See p. 30, Chap. IV. (Details of Weave and Finish).

† See p. 43, Chap. IV. (Details of Weave and Finish).

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE II

A SPECIMEN SAMARKAND RUG

It has already been noted that these rugs are included in the Chinese group on account of their strong resemblance in colouring and general characters. They are, however, to be distinguished from them by the characteristic mixture of Chinese with foreign elements (usually Persian and nomadic) which they display. Our example shows us a rounded central medallion of typically Chinese appearance, Chinese frets at the four corners of the Field, Jui heads (four in number) and an outer border bearing a "Swastica" and "T" Meander, whilst in the same piece we find, Persian rosettes, nomadic eight-pointed stars, the tri-cleft leaf of Armenia, and scattered representations of the "tree of life." The colouring is purely Mongolian, and is worthy of description. More than a hundred years ago the colour of the Field ground of our specimen was "peach," to-day it is a thing of indescribable beauty, displaying every shade from "peach" to "golden tan," whilst the patterns are picked out in ivory white, brown, and the deepest and richest of golden yellows. Such are the antique rugs of ancient Samarkand.

[From the Author's collection.]



PLATE II. A SPECIMEN SAMARKAND RUG.

COMPARISONS

geometrical, but differ from those of the above group, in that they consist of the massing of various designs, and not the repetition of a single one.

Caucasian weavers exhibit a marked fondness for the use of the "Latch-Hook" * design, and it is seldom that this device is found to be absent from both Field and Border of their rugs.

They are finished with short, uncoloured end-webs, and tied invariably with the "Ghiordes" † knot, additional points which will serve to distinguish them from the rugs of Central Asia, with which they might possibly otherwise at times be confused.

4. Persian Rugs.—These differ from the preceding groups, in that their designs are not geometrical, but essentially floral. Flowering shrubs, flowers in rows, flowers on stalks, with foliage, flower forms enclosed in some variety of trellis work, or diaper pattern, such are the motives of the weavers of Iran.

On those occasions when such designs are

* See p. 20, Chap. III. (Patterns and Designs).

† See p. 30, Chap. IV. (Details of Weave).

PERSIAN RUGS

absent from the Field, their place is taken by one of the recognised repetitive patterns of Persia, such as the "Pear" * or "Herati," * but it is a notable and distinctive feature of Persian rugs, that floral forms are only on the very rarest occasions entirely missing from the borders, or the Swaying Vine † from all the border stripes. Their colours are rich and subdued, and their colour-schemes owe their effect, largely, to their skilful colour contrasting. Cotton will be found to be employed as the material for the "Warp" threads, in roughly one-half of the districts of Persia, and the presence of a cotton "Warp" ‡ is strongly suggestive evidence of a Persian origin, and particularly so, since in Caucasia, Turkey, and Central Asia wool is the material of choice.

5. Turkish Rugs.—The designs of these rugs, like those of the preceding group, consist essentially of floral motives, but their flower

* For description, see pp. 15 and 16, Figs. 1, 2, and 3, Chap. III. (Patterns and Designs).

† See p. 91, Chap. VI. (Border Stripes).

‡ See p. 28, Chap. IV. (Details of Weave and Finish).

COMPARISONS

forms are conventional rather than natural, whilst the repetitive patterns of Persia, the "Herati," the "Mina Khani"* and the "Pear," are never met with.

In their drawing, heavy angular lines take the place of graceful curves, and, although in the borders conventionalised and degenerated flower and leaf forms are very constant, the "Swaying Vine" † is missing.

The colours are rich and boldly massed, but the pile is comparatively lustreless, and presents a contrast to the silky sheen of the old Persian or Central Asian pieces. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of this group consists in the fact that the large majority of these rugs are Prayer rugs (at least such is the case amongst the older specimens), and can be recognised immediately, by the presence of the Prayer Arch, whilst in other groups such pieces are rarely encountered, and in the Persian especially so.

Their weavers employ the "Ghiordes"

* For description, see pp. 15 and 16, Figs. 1, 2, and 3, Chap. III. (Patterns and Designs).

† See p. 91, Chap. VI. (Border Stripes).

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE III

A SPECIMEN CENTRAL ASIAN RUG

And in this case a Royal Bokhara, displaying the pattern typical of these pieces, namely, an all-over design consisting of a series of quartered octagons repeated in rows throughout the Field. The principal Border stripe is of chequer variety, and the outer stripe bears a saw-tooth design.

Here we find no floral forms, no swaying vine meanders, no continuity of pattern nor, in fact, any of those features for which we have been taught to look in a Persian rug. Instead, we see a typical product of Central Asia, bearing the hall-mark of its group, namely, a Field pattern consisting of a single geometrical device (in this case an octagon) repeated in rows. The monotony is relieved in this specimen, as in most, by the insertion of smaller diamond-shaped figures between the rows of octagons.

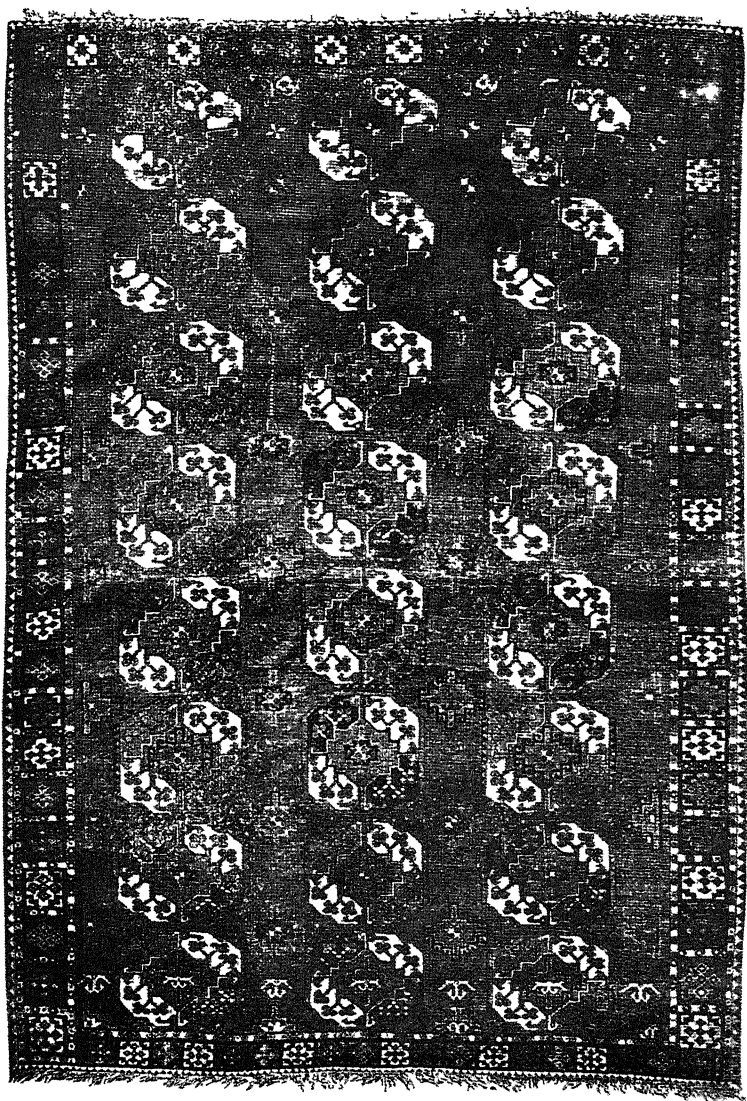


PLATE III A SPECIMEN CENTRAL ASIAN RUG.

COMPARISONS

knot, and exhibit a preference for coloured end-webs of moderate length.

6. Indian Rugs.—Their designs are mainly floral, and the treatment more or less naturalistic, so that, in theory, they resemble the rugs of Persia, though, in actual practice, they differ widely from them.

They are to all intents and purposes modern productions, and bear the stamp of the commercial system under which they were woven, in their nondescript patterns, their coarse weave, and heavy pile.

Plainness and lack of elaboration in pattern drawing, large dead spaces of plain colour, these are labour-savers, the hall-marks of modern work. The wool of the pile is notably dull and lustreless, and, since India took both early and eagerly to the use of aniline dyes, no small proportion of these specimens will be found to be suffering from this taint.

To the collector it matters nothing, hard wearing or hard woven though these modern products be, since in them the spirit of the East has perished, dead as the Arts of Mogul craftsmen and the lost magic of the potters of Kang-hsi.

CHAPTER III

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

THESE may conveniently be considered under two headings, patterns of the Field, and patterns of the Border ; the " Field " consisting of the square central portion of the rug, and the " Border " of the narrow stripes enclosing it.

The Border may consist of a single stripe, or of a broad or principal stripe surrounded by comparatively narrow stripes, or it may be composed of a varying number of stripes of equal width ; and for a consideration of these details a later space is reserved (see Chap. VI., Border Stripes), since it is our intention here to deal only with the more important of those designs, which may be recognised, scattered as isolated units throughout the Fields of Eastern rugs, or repeated, to form an all-over, repetitive pattern.

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

1. **The Herati Design.**—Found only in the form of an all-over pattern, and peculiar to the rugs of Persia, it is the favourite device of the weavers of Sehna and Feraghan, common in the rugs of Herat and Kurdistan, and to be found on occasions in specimens from almost every Persian district.

Great variations are to be noted at times, in the size and elaboration of its drawing, but the true elements of the design, the four crumpled-leaf forms, surrounding a central figure of diamond shape, are at all times easily discernible, to the practised observer.

2. **The Mina Khani.**—A design peculiar to Persia, it is seen only in the form of an all-over, repetitive pattern, but is less widely distributed than the “Herati,” and far less frequently encountered. Its elements consist

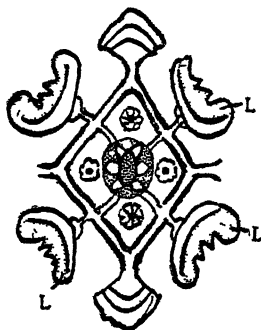


FIG. 1.—THE HERATI DESIGN.

Showing the 4 Leaf forms (L) surrounding a centrally placed figure of Diamond shape: This figure itself usually contains floral forms of some type, and in this instance 5 rosettes.

PERSIAN RUGS

of a diamond-shaped figure and five flower

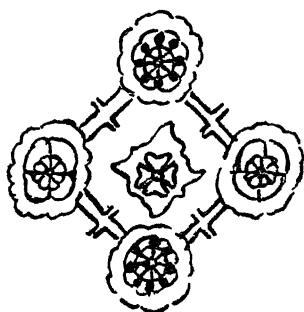


FIG. 2

forms (more or less conventionalised, as the

case may be), one

within, and one at each

angle of the diamond.

It is a pattern greatly

favoured by Kurdish

tribesmen, and com-

paratively seldom met

with in specimens not of their weaving.

3. The Pear

or Cone Design.—

Repeated to form

an all-over pat-

tern, this is

perhaps the com-

monest of all

Persian Field de-

signs, and is most

frequently en-

countered in the

weavings of Sara-

bend, Shiraz,

Herat, Khorassan,

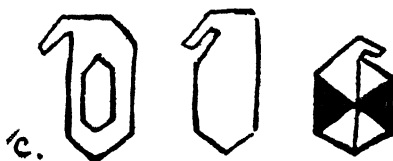
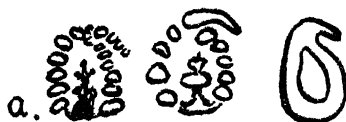


FIG. 3.—THE PEAR.

a. Persian types. b. Indian types.

c. Geometrical types.

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

and Sehna, but is not peculiar to any district of Persia.

The Pear device may further be encountered as an isolated unit, in the Field or Border of almost any Persian rug, or, again, in a more geometrical form (see Fig. 3, *c*) in a few of the weavings of the Caucasus, and notably those of Baku. As an all-over pattern, it is to be found in an elongated form (see Fig. 3, *b*) at times in the rugs of India.

4. The Rosette.—This is merely a conventionalised or degenerated flower form, and is commonly met with in the rugs of Persia and Turkey, and more rarely encountered in the weavings of the Caucasus, and those of Central Asia.

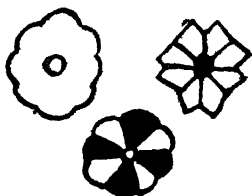


FIG. 4.

5. The Eight-pointed Star.—This design, a hall-mark of nomad weaving, is to be encountered at times in the rugs of almost every group, with the exception of China. It is found, however, on occasions, in the rugs of Samarkand—as are also the Rosette, the Eight-pointed Star, and the Tri-Cleft Leaf—

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE IV

A SPECIMEN TURKISH RUG

The majority of this group are Prayer rugs, and this is one of them, which quite well illustrates the characteristics of these specimens.

A Prayer space with a flat base, and a domed roof, forming the Prayer Arch, which is in turn surmounted by a spandrel, upon which rests a panel; such is the common arrangement of the Field of these pieces. The Prayer Arch may vary in shape or in depth, whilst in some types a second panel is found at the base of the Prayer space, but the essentials remain the same.

In our present specimen the Prayer space is of plain colour with small floral forms projecting inwards from its sides, and a large floral figure dependent from the apex of the Arch. The Prayer Arch is low, and shows a serrated margin. The spandrel is covered with a delicate floral tracery, and is prolonged backward to completely surround the Prayer space. The panel is single.

The borders are elaborate, containing many stripes, the outer displaying the pattern described on p. 2, Fig. 93. The general characters of the piece are floral, but the flower and leaf forms are not those of Persia.

This is a fine example of a seventeenth-century Koulah rug.

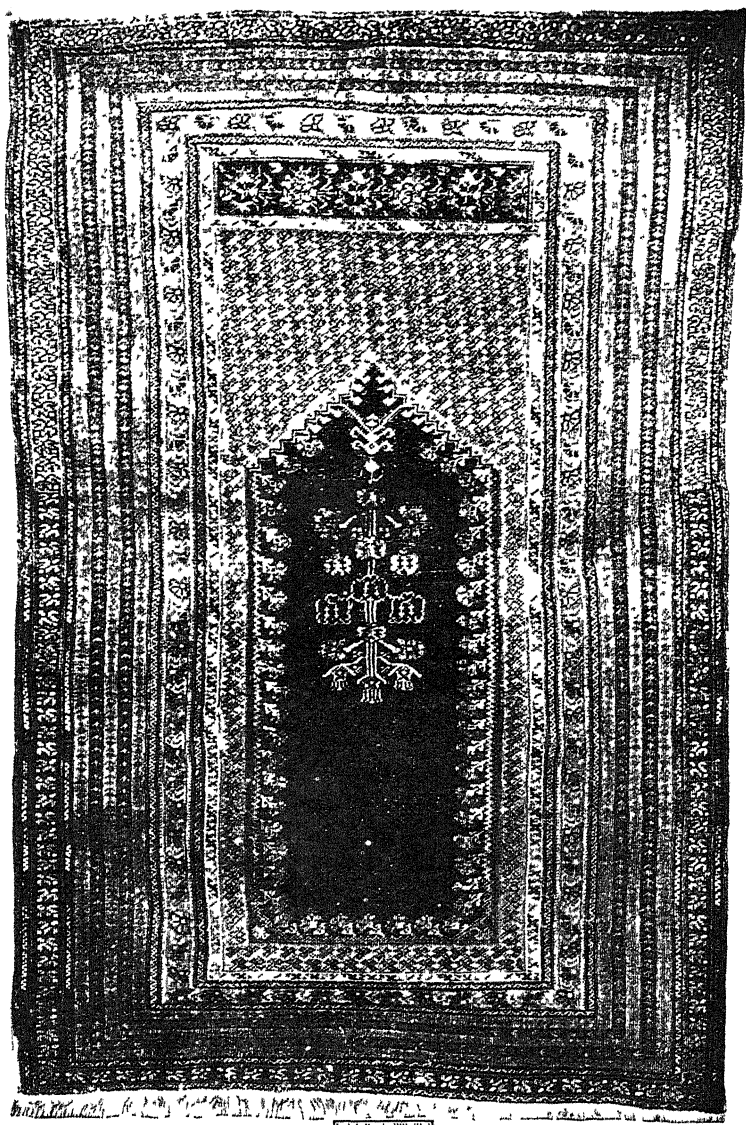


PLATE IV. A SPECIMEN TURKISH RUG.

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

which, the presence of any of these symbols, would help to distinguish from the rugs of China proper.

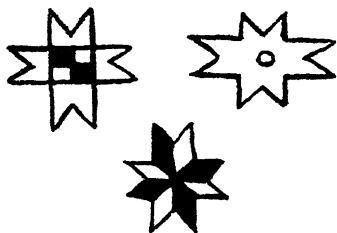


FIG. 5.

6. The Cloud Band.—A very ancient device, Mongolian in origin, found sometimes in the Fields or Borders of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Persian rugs. Occasionally met with in older or modern Sirapis.



FIG. 6.

7. The Tri-Cleft Leaf.

—An old Armenian symbol, which may at times be encountered to-day in the Fields of the weavings of Turkey and Caucasia. Unlikely to be found in a Persian rug.

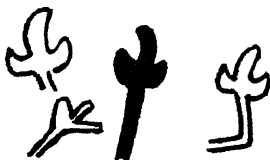


FIG. 7.

PERSIAN RUGS

8. The Latch-Hook Design—This device might almost be considered the distinguishing



FIG. 8.

mark of the products of the Caucasus, since it is rarely absent, from both Field and Border, of a Caucasian rug, and but infrequently found in the rugs

of other groups. It is generally used in series, to fringe some geometrical design, such as a



diamond or an octagon. This design is not seen in Persian rugs.



FIG. 9.

9. The Comb.—Found present, as an adventitious design, in the Fields or Borders of Caucasian rugs, and more rarely in those of Turkey and Central Asia. Not used in Persia.

10. The Octagon.—Not found in Persian rugs, but common, as adventitious designs,

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

in either Field or Border of those of other groups.

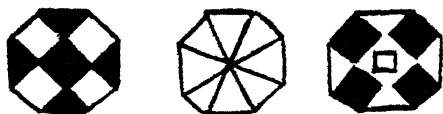


FIG. 10.

11. The Diamond.—Ditto as above. These adventitious designs are not in favour with the Persian weaver, doubtless because he prefers flower forms with which to fill his dead spaces.



FIG. 11.

12. The Elephant-Foot Pattern.—This is merely a coarser form of Octagon, and is peculiar to the Central Asian group, and found for the most part in rugs of a coarse and modern type.

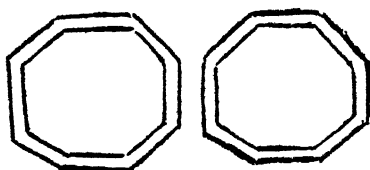


FIG. 12.

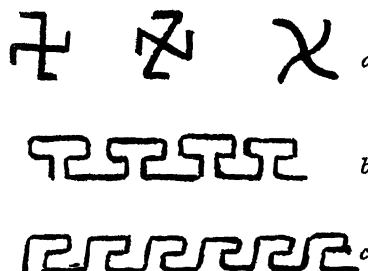
13. The "S" Design.—These "S"



FIG. 13.

PERSIAN RUGS

designs are seen at times in Turkish and Caucasian rugs.

14. The Swastika (*a*), the "T" (*b*), and the Key (*c*). —
- a* These devices are peculiar to the rugs of China. The
- b* Key design is also rarely met with, as
- c* a subsidiary stripe pattern, in the
- 
- FIG. 14.

Turkoman weavings of Central Asia.

15. The Henna Flower Design. —A purely Persian fancy. Repeated in rows to form an "all-over" pattern, it is comparatively rarely encountered. A rug bearing this design is almost certain to be a Feraghan.*

16. The Palmette.—Associated with the "Cloud band," this device



FIG. 15.

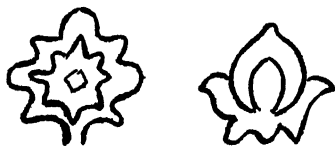


FIG. 16.

is a characteristic feature of the antique, so-called Ispahan rugs.

* See Type Analysis of Feraghan Rugs, p. 47, Chap. V.

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

17. A Persian leaf pattern designed upon somewhat the same principle as the "Herati"; but with straight spear-shaped leaves, and with their bases set towards the central figure. This design usually is coarsely rendered, and a single figure sometimes suffices for the entire Field pattern of a small

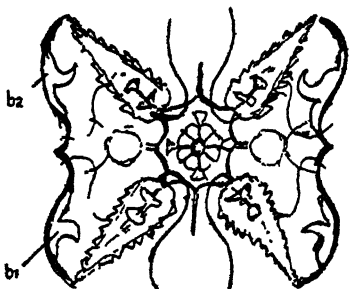


FIG. 17.

rug. It is not frequently encountered, and is peculiar to the rugs of Khorassan. The beak-like processes, so characteristic of the Khorassan border stripe (see Fig. 6, p. 87) are reproduced here (*b* 1, 2), and are probably leaf forms.

18. The Central Medallion. — This is merely a panel or reserve, introduced into the design of the Field for decorative effect, and is not therefore strictly speaking itself a pattern, but rather an adjunct to a pattern. These medallions may vary considerably in size and importance, and may be classified according

PERSIAN RUGS

to their shape, as, rounded, oval, lozenge (diamond-shaped), or geometrical, *i.e.* hexagonal or octagonal. In Persian rugs it is rare to find any but the oval or lozenge variety employed, and these may be with or without pendants, lobed or plain, and with stepped or plain sides.

Two special variations of the central medallion call for separate mention, and these are the "concentric" medallions peculiar to Gorevans and the "chain" medallion, so commonly seen in Hamadans and Shirazis. The former arrangement consists of a series of medallions enclosed, the one within the other, and having a common centre, the latter, of a series of medallions placed side by side and continuous with one another, their centres lying upon the same axis.

19. The Diaper.—To this class of design belong all those patterns in which the Field of the rug is divided into a number of small compartments of similar size and shape, by intersecting bands of trellis or lattice work. The diaper is classified according to the shape of these compartments, as octagonal, hexagonal,

PATTERNS AND DESIGNS

diamond, etc. The compartments themselves are seldom empty, but are occupied by some small design which is likely to be floral in character if the rug is Persian, but geometrical if the piece is Caucasian.

Diaper designs are very rarely encountered in the weavings of Turkey or Central Asia.

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PLATE V

A SEHNA RUG (WITH HERATI DESIGN)

Note the closeness and delicacy of the pattern drawing since this is a strongly marked feature of these rugs, also the simple character of the border with its three stripes. The weavers prefer light tones to the sombre dark colouring of the Kurds and suchlike, and this also can be quite well made out in the plate.

Suggestive as the above details may be, we ought, however, to remember that it is by their practical details of weave that the expert recognises these rugs from all others. (See Type Analysis, p. 75, Chap. V.)

(By kind permission of Messrs. Cardinal & Harford.)

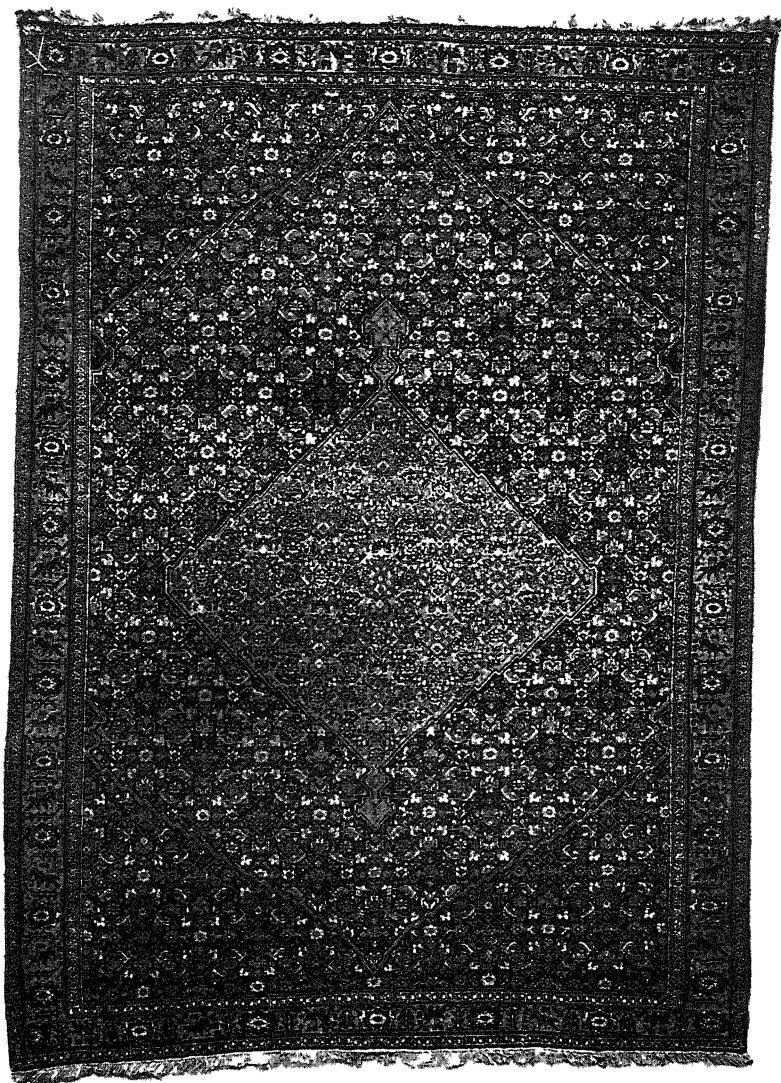


PLATE V. A PERSIAN SEHNA RUG (HERATI PATTERN).

CHAPTER IV

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

THE structure of an Eastern rug is very simple, composed as it is of four elements only : the Warp, the Weft, the Knots, and the Pile ; and this scheme of structure is never departed from, though the treatment of the elements themselves may, and does, vary considerably with the country and district of manufacture.

The constancy of these district variations and their persistence, unchanged by contact with adjoining neighbourhoods, is a notable feature of these products, and is largely due, no doubt, to the fact that his system of weaving is learnt by the weaver in childhood, and becoming, at an early age, an almost automatic process, is therefore unlikely to be departed from in later life.

It is their very constancy that makes a

PERSIAN RUGS

knowledge of these variations of the highest importance to any who would master the study of Persian rugs, and alone makes possible, in many difficult cases, an accuracy of localisation impossible to be obtained by any other method of investigation.

1. **The Warp.** (*See Diagram.*)—This is the term applied to the stout longitudinal threads, which stretch from end to end of the rug, and appear free in the end-webs and fringes. These form the foundation of the rug, the knots being tied upon them, and the weft threaded around them.

2. **The Weft.** (*See Diagram.*)—These are the transverse threads which traverse the rug from side to side, passing in front of, and behind, alternate warp threads. They are hidden from view in front by the pile, but are easily distinguished upon the back aspect of the rug as they pass across it between each row of knots.

It should be noted that in the body of the rug the warp is thus almost entirely obscured from view, being hidden by the pile and the weft in front, and covered by the weft and the

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

knots behind. A glance at Diagram I. should materially aid us to form a clear conception of these arrangements of weft and of warp.

3. The Knots.—These are hardly knots, in the true sense of the word, but rather twists of yarn, kept in place merely by the pressure of neighbouring warp threads at the sides, and the weft above and below.

Each knot is tied upon two adjacent threads of the warp, and appears on the back aspect of the rug as consisting of two equal halves (the

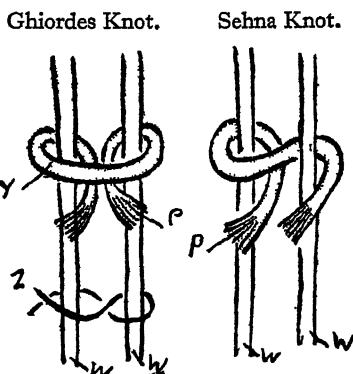


DIAGRAM I.

W = Warp.
Z = Weft (crossing twice)
P = Pile (formed by the loose ends of the yarn after making the knot.)
Y = The yarn forming the knot.

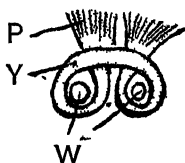
exceptions to this being noted under the discussion on Warp arrangement), the warp itself being thus divided up by this means into a series of twin pairs of threads.

Knots of two types only are employed by

PERSIAN RUGS

Eastern weavers, namely, the Ghiordes or Turkish, and the Sehna or Persian, and these differ but slightly in their method of tying, this difference being easily appreciated from a careful study of the accompanying diagrams.

Ghiordes Knot.



Sehna Knot.

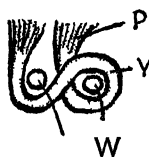


DIAGRAM II.

Cross section of a knot. Showing—
W = The warp threads.

P = The pile.

Y = The yarn of which the knot is made and whose loose ends are trimmed to form the pile.

It will be noticed as characteristic of the Ghiordes knot that its two ends (the extremities of which form the pile) emerge together in a single tuft from between the two threads upon which the knot is tied, whilst in the case of the Sehna, these ends emerge separately, one from between the two warp threads, and one from outside them. A true appreciation of this simple detail will enable us at all times to distinguish our two knots by the application

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

of the following practical test which will suffice for all we need. We take the tuft, otherwise the pile, of a single knot and attempt carefully to separate the two ends forming it so as to

expose to view a portion of one of the warp threads upon which it is tied. In the case of a Sehna knot we shall easily be able to accomplish our object, but

in the case of a Ghiordes all our efforts will prove

unavailing, and will merely serve to twist it the tighter round its warp threads. It is very desirable to be able to effect this distinction, and we suggest the following alternative method in case our readers may prefer it. On a careful examination of what might well be termed the collar of the knot the whole tuft of pile will be seen to emerge from under it if it be a Ghiordes, but part of the tuft only if it be a Sehna and the remainder from beside

Back View of Knot.

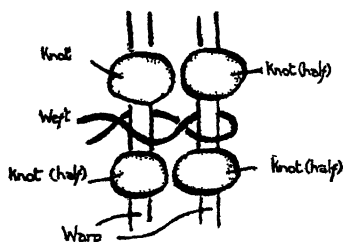


DIAGRAM III.

Showing how each knot is composed of two halves (which appear somewhat like two beads upon the back of the rug).

PERSIAN RUGS

it, and to the right or left of the collar as the case may be.

4. The Pile.—This element is very simple, and consists merely of the free ends of the yarn composing the knots trimmed by the weaver to the requisite length.

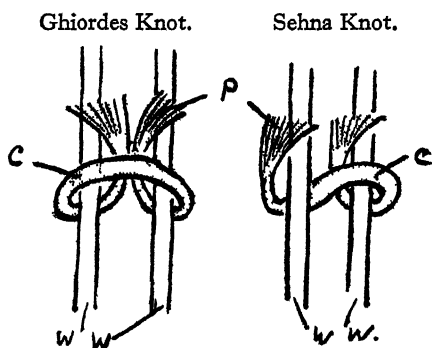


DIAGRAM IV.

W = Warp.

C = Collar of knot.

P = Pile.

Showing the varying relation of the ends of yarn which form the pile to the collar (C) in the case of a Ghiordes and a Sehna knot.

The Warp (*continued*).—This element admits of three methods of treatment which are as follows :—

1. The warp threads lie all in the same plane (see A, Diagram V.).

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

2. Alternate warp threads are depressed (see B, Diagram V.).

3. Alternate warp threads are completely buried (see c, Diagram V.).

1. In this case all warp threads appear equally prominent at the back of the rug, since all lie at the same level and in the same plane.

This is the common practice, and is the method employed by all weavers other than Persian, whilst it is the arrangement followed in the rugs of certain districts of Persia itself, as, for example, the weavings of Sehna, Shiraz, Sarabend, Feraghan, Hamadan, Karadagh, and Kurdistan, Gorevan (sometimes), and Mosul.

2. When this method is employed the warp threads no longer lie all at the same level, since in the weaving, alternate threads are drawn forward, and therefore appear depressed below the level of the remainder, upon the back aspect of the rug.

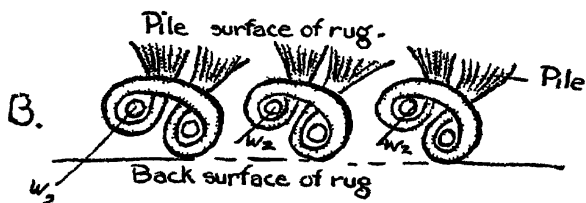
A practice—with a few Turkish exceptions—peculiar to Persia, it is distinctive of the weavings of Gorevan, Herez, Joshaghan, Niris, Sirapi, and Kurdistan (sometimes).

3. In this method of weaving the alternate

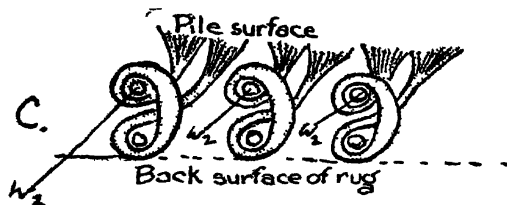
PERSIAN RUGS



Showing all the warp threads lying at the same level (*i.e.* in the same plane) and both halves of each knot equally prominent therefore on the back of the rug.



Showing alternate warp threads (W_2) depressed and the corresponding half of each knot less prominent on the back surface of the rug



Showing alternate warp threads (W_2) buried (*i.e.* doubled under) and the corresponding half of each knot hidden from view therefore on the back surface of the rug.

DIAGRAM V.
Cross Section of Rug.

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

warp threads are drawn forward and under the remaining threads so as to be completely buried by them, and therefore invisible at the back of the rug.

By this means it will be noted a double foundation is secured, and such rugs are never thin (like, for example, a Sehna), however fine the weave or short the nap. It is a practice confined to Persia, and is the plan adopted by the weavers of Kashan, Sarouk, Kirman, Kermanshah, Bijar, Tabriz, Sarabend, Khorassan, and Herat.

It is worthy, perhaps, of passing notice that of all the fine-grained, close-woven rugs of Persia only one, namely, the Sehna, is to be found outside this group.

The Weft (*continued*).—In the large majority of Persian rugs it is customary to find that the weft crosses twice—that is to say, crosses and recrosses—between each row of knots, and the following should therefore be noted since they are exceptions to the general rule. In Sehnas and Hamadans the weft crosses but once only, in Mosul and Kurdish weavings it may cross either once, or more

PERSIAN RUGS

usually twice, whilst in the rugs of Herat and Khorassan the number of the crossings varies from two to three or more, at intervals, in the same specimen, a unique feature not found anywhere else. Comparisons of colour,

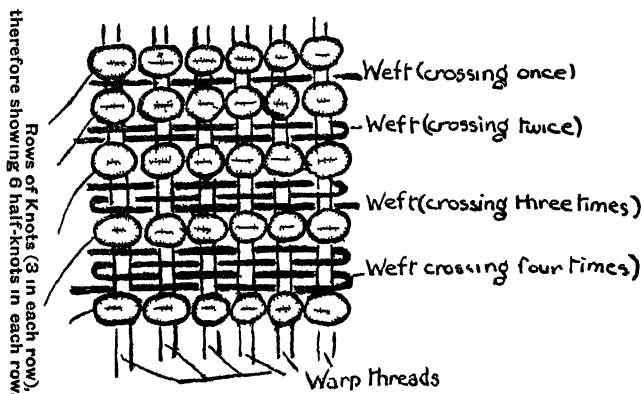


DIAGRAM VI.

View of Back of Rug.

Showing how the weft appears (on the back of the rug) crossing between the rows of knots. Also the different appearance caused by the weft crossing once, twice, etc.

appearance, and material may also prove of value for purposes of identification, since the single weft of the Hamadan would be coarse, whilst that of the Sehna would be fine; the weft of the Mosul or Kurdish would be wool (coarse), that of the Hamadan or Sehna cotton.

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The very fine blue weft of the Kashan, almost hidden between the close-pressed rows of knots, or the pink-dyed, coarseish woollen weft of the more loosely woven Shiraz, are features typical of these specimens ; whilst outside the Persian group, the fine reddish-brown weft of the Bergamo (Turkish) and the equally fine greyish-brown of the Royal Bokhara (Central Asia) are distinctive of these rugs.

The Knots. (See Diagrams I. and II., pp. 29 and 30.)—These, as we have already seen, are of two varieties, namely, the Ghiordes and the Sehna.

The Sehna knot is always employed in the rugs of the Central Asian group, and is used in Persia, also in the rugs of certain of its districts, namely, those of Kirman, Kashan, Sarouk, Kermanshah, Sehna, Sarabend, Meshed, Shiraz, Feraghan, and Khorassan.

The Ghiordes knot is in use throughout Turkey and the Caucasus, and is found in the following Persian weavings : namely, those of Gorevan, Hamadan, Bijars, Joshaghan, Tabriz, Shiraz (but less frequently than the

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE VI

This fine old antique Caucasian serves admirably to illustrate the geometrical pattern drawing which is the distinctive characteristic of that group. The Field design consists of a mass of numerous different devices, all of a geometrical type and of various sizes and character. These designs are in no way connected with their neighbours, so that the effect produced somewhat resembles a mosaic, and there is none of that continuity of pattern so typical of Persian traditions. Floral forms are conspicuous by their absence, and the "dead spaces" are filled with many of the small adventitious designs described in Chapter III. Rosettes, diamonds, octagons, combs, eight-pointed stars, and latch hooks, all these and more are to be found on careful search. The principal Border stripe bears a geometrical pattern involving the use of latch hooks, but there are no flowers and no "swaying vine meander." The inner Border stripe shows the "reciprocal trefoil" design illustrated (Fig. 8) on p. 93. This piece should be compared with Plate I. (our frontispiece), since it is somewhat of a corresponding age and quality, differing only in type.

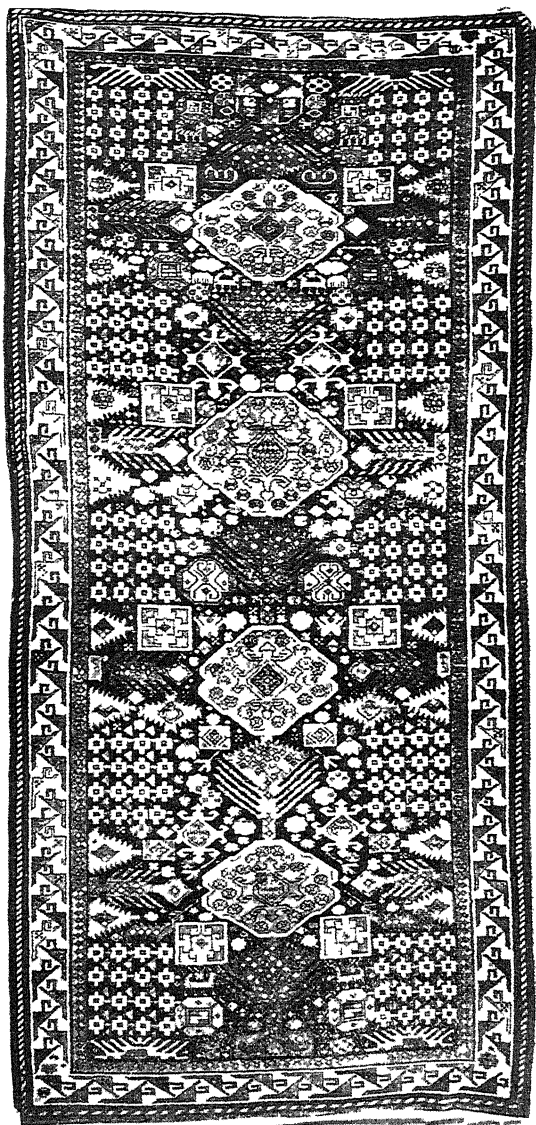


PLATE VI A SPECIMEN CAUCASIAN RUG.

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

Sehna), Mosul, Niris, Karadagh, Kurdistan, and Herat.

The Pile or Nap. (See Diagram II., p. 30.)
—A study of the quality of its material and workmanship, whilst providing us with valuable evidence as to the age and excellence of a rug, will contribute but little in the majority of cases towards its identification.

Few rugs possess an individuality of pile sufficient to aid us materially in this research, but some show features sufficiently marked to be worthy perhaps of a passing notice. We have already directed attention towards the peculiarly dull and lustreless character of this element—in the Indian group ; and proceeding directly to a consideration of the rugs of Persia we shall here encounter one or two interesting minor details. It is a characteristic of the older Hamadans, and one which serves to distinguish them from the more modern products of this district as well as from other Persian weavings, that the pile is largely composed of camel's hair ; an unusual feature, rarely found elsewhere.

The nap is notably silky in the rugs of

PERSIAN RUGS

Herat and Khorassan, and in the older Shirazis, while it is unusually velvety in specimens of Kashan, Sarouk, and Sehna.

It is remarkably closely trimmed in the weavings of Tabriz, Kashan, Sarouk, and Sehna ; and outside the Persian group in the Royal Bokharas of Central Asia.

The “weave ” is the general term applied to the resulting aggregate of the above details, and depends upon the weaver’s treatment of them, but particularly upon the technique of the knot.

The weave may be of coarse, medium, or fine grain, according to the coarseness of the yarn with which it is tied, and it may be either close or loose in texture, a question governed largely by the treatment of the knots, whether these be drawn tight and hammered down, or, as the case may be, the reverse procedure adopted. It can be easily understood that coarseness (stoutness) of weave does not preclude closeness, or fineness necessarily denote it, and a comparison of the number of knots to the inch—a fair criterion though it be for the modern commercial products and

DETAILS OF WEAWE AND FINISH

the fetish though it is of ignorant dealers—is not by any means the surest key to a proper appreciation of the standard of merit and excellence of workmanship of many of the older weavings.

All considerations are of value to the student that will assist him in his learning by enabling him to divide his subject into parts, and the question of weave will be found particularly useful for this purpose, since it enables us to subdivide the total unwieldy mass of Persian rugs into the following small groups.

- Group* 1. Weave of fine grain and close texture : Kashan,* Sarouk, Sehna, Tabriz, and Sarabend.
2. Weave of medium grain and close texture : Joshaghan, Kermanshah, Khorassan, and Meshed.
3. Weave of coarse grain and close texture : Bijar, Mosul, Hamadan, Kurdistan, Herat, and Feraghan.

Kashans, etc. Each of these classes of rugs is described in detail under Type Analysis (Chap. V.).

PERSIAN RUGS

4. Weave of loose texture and fine grain : nil.
5. Weave of loose texture and medium grain : Shiraz, Niris, and Karadagh.
6. Weave of loose texture and coarse grain : Gorevan and Herez.

The Details of Finish :

(a) *The Finish of the Ends*.—This usually consists of a web continued by a fringe, the web being composed of the interwoven threads of the warp and weft, and the fringe consisting merely of the subsequent continuation of the free warp ends. The end-web may be long or short, coloured or plain, according to the local traditions of the weaver. In old specimens it will be not infrequently noticed that all trace of end finish has completely disappeared, destroyed by time and wear.

(b) *The Finish of the Sides*.—The weft having traversed the rug is made to encircle a stout cord lying beside it, and recrossing is wrapped around a similar cord on the other side, this process continuing until both are covered

DETAILS OF WEAVE AND FINISH

from end to end by the weft. This method we shall describe as "weft-overcasting." A thread of coloured yarn may now be wound around the cords previously covered (overcast) by the weft, giving us a method of finish which we shall term "double-overcasting." In place of one heavy cord at each side two or more may be employed, which methods we shall designate two-cord, three-cord, etc., overcasting, or double-overcasting, as the case may be.

This simple nomenclature, whilst avoiding the use of the term "selvage," provides us with all that we require, namely, a method for comparing specimens.

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE VII

A SPECIMEN CHINESE RUG

Typically Chinese is the central medallion, with its rounded shape, crenated margin, and floral scroll work, and so also in their treatment are the scattered flower sprays, which, together with the butterflies at the four corners, form the design of the Field. The middle Border stripe displays a variety of the "T" meander, the outer a floral scroll design.

Their most distinctive colouring and designs make these of all rugs the most easy to recognise, and the group, once recognised, can hardly be confused with any other.



PLATE VII. A SPECIMEN CHINESE RUG.

CHAPTER V

PERSIAN RUGS AND THEIR TYPE ANALYSIS

HITHERTO, we have mainly concerned ourselves with the acquisition of a general knowledge of the rugs of Persia and their various types, and it remains for us still to acquire that particular knowledge of detail, which alone can supply the connection between our general knowledge and its practical application.

Below will be found a separate and detailed analysis of the characteristics of each of the better-known classes of Persian rugs, with comments upon their special or peculiar features, whose significance will be readily understood and appreciated in virtue of our recently gained knowledge. For the sake of convenience of reference the rugs will be discussed in alphabetical order.

Bijars.—These rugs are comparatively easy

PERSIAN RUGS

to recognise, since they alone (with the exception of Herats) present the combination of a stout (coarse) weave and a Ghiordes knot with the "buried thread" system of warp treatment (see *Methods of Warp Treatment*, Chap. IV., p. 32). Their colours, chiefly reds and blues, are often boldly massed and tend to remind us at times of the rugs of Turkey.

Field Patterns. Not distinctive. Seldom elaborate. A central medallion is a frequently encountered feature.

Borders. Simple in character and consisting usually of three "stripes" only. Patterns not distinctive.

Warp (Wool). Alternate warp threads are "doubled under," thus producing a double foundation (see p. 33).

Weft. Wool (dyed red or plain) crosses twice between each row of knots.

Knot. Ghiordes.

TYPE ANALYSIS

Weave.

Coarse and close.

Pile.

On rare occasions this is composed partially of camel's hair.

Feraghans (see Plate No. VIII., p. 52).—The Feraghan is one of the few rugs in which we find the Sehna knot combined with a weave of coarse grain.

Their weavers, too, are remarkable for their consistent use of certain designs, the "Herati" being on most occasions the chosen Field pattern, and the so-called "Turtle," that of the principal Border stripe (see Chap. VI., Border Stripes and their Patterns, Fig. 3, p. 85).

The inmost Border stripe bears almost invariably a reciprocal "saw-tooth" pattern (see Chap. VI., Border Stripes), and a further constant feature of these rugs is the presence of four small triangular corners to the Field, each being marked off from the remainder of the Field by a serrated edge.

Field Patterns.

Almost invariably the "Herati," but rarely a

PERSIAN RUGS

repeated "Henna flower," or some form of "Diaper" pattern. In many of the older specimens, the design is in old rose-pink, and so closely and finely drawn as to almost obscure the dark-blue ground upon which it is woven. A central medallion is common in the moderns, but is found on occasions in the old rugs also.

Borders.

Characteristic and elaborate, presenting commonly seven stripes. The main stripe is wide and well marked, and displays as a rule the so-called "Turtle" design, whilst in many of the older and finer specimens, its ground colour is a green, of a peculiar and light grass shade. The inner stripe, as already stated, bears almost

TYPE ANALYSIS

- invariably some form of
“ saw-tooth ” pattern.
- Warp* (Cotton). All threads lie in the same plane, and therefore each is equally prominent on the back of the rug.
- Weft*. Crosses twice between each row of knots.
- Knot*. Sehna. It is often stated that the Ghiordes knot also is employed at times by these weavers, but the author himself has never seen a genuine Feraghan tied with this knot, and believes all such pieces to be nondescript copies of uncertain origin.
- Weave*. Coarse grain and close texture.
- Pile*. Short in the old specimens, but of medium length in the more modern. Of fine quality, silky, and lustrous.

Gorevans.—Easily recognised by their con-

PERSIAN RUGS

centric, diamond-shaped, central medallions, with stepped sides, and their consistent use of the " Turtle " pattern, in the principal Border stripe. Their colours, too, shades of terracotta, apricot, and blue, are peculiarly distinctive, and once seen are difficult to forget.

Field Patterns.

Concentric medallions with stepped sides, occupy the centre of the Field, whilst throughout the remainder are scattered degenerated leaf and flower forms, on heavy angular stalks ; the style of the drawing reminding us greatly of that seen on antique Turkish rugs.

Borders.

Stripes usually three to five in number. The main stripe is wide and well marked, and usually displays a slight modification of the " Turtle " design of the Feraghans.

TYPE ANALYSIS

<i>Warp</i> (Cotton).	Alternate warp threads are slightly depressed (see Chap. IV., Methods of Warp Treatment, p. 32), but sometimes all are equally prominent.
<i>Weft.</i>	Crosses twice.
<i>Knot.</i>	Ghiordes.
<i>Weave.</i>	Coarse grain and loose texture.
<i>Size.</i>	These weavings come only in carpet size and are rarely found as small rugs.
<i>Finish.</i>	The end-webs may be coloured, a feature found in but few Persian rugs.

Hamadans (see Plate No. XIII., p. 106).—Typical specimens of these are perhaps the easiest of all Persian rugs to recognise at sight, on account of the large proportions of camel's hair to be found in the pile, and the broad and conspicuous outer edging, also of plain camel's hair, which are the hall-marks of the older pieces. A close examination distinguishes

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PLATE VIII

A FERAGHAN RUG (WITH "HERATI" PATTERN)

The small triangular corners marked off from the rest of the Field by a serrated margin, the "Herati" design of the Field, the "Turtle" Border stripe, the "saw-tooth" pattern of the innermost stripe, all these are characteristics which we have learnt to look for in the rugs of Feraghan. In our specimen they are all to be seen, as indeed they are in most of the fine old rugs of this district, whose weavers are perhaps the most consistent in all Persia in their adherence to their favourite pattern and its accompanying details.

The Border is wide and contains no less than seven stripes.

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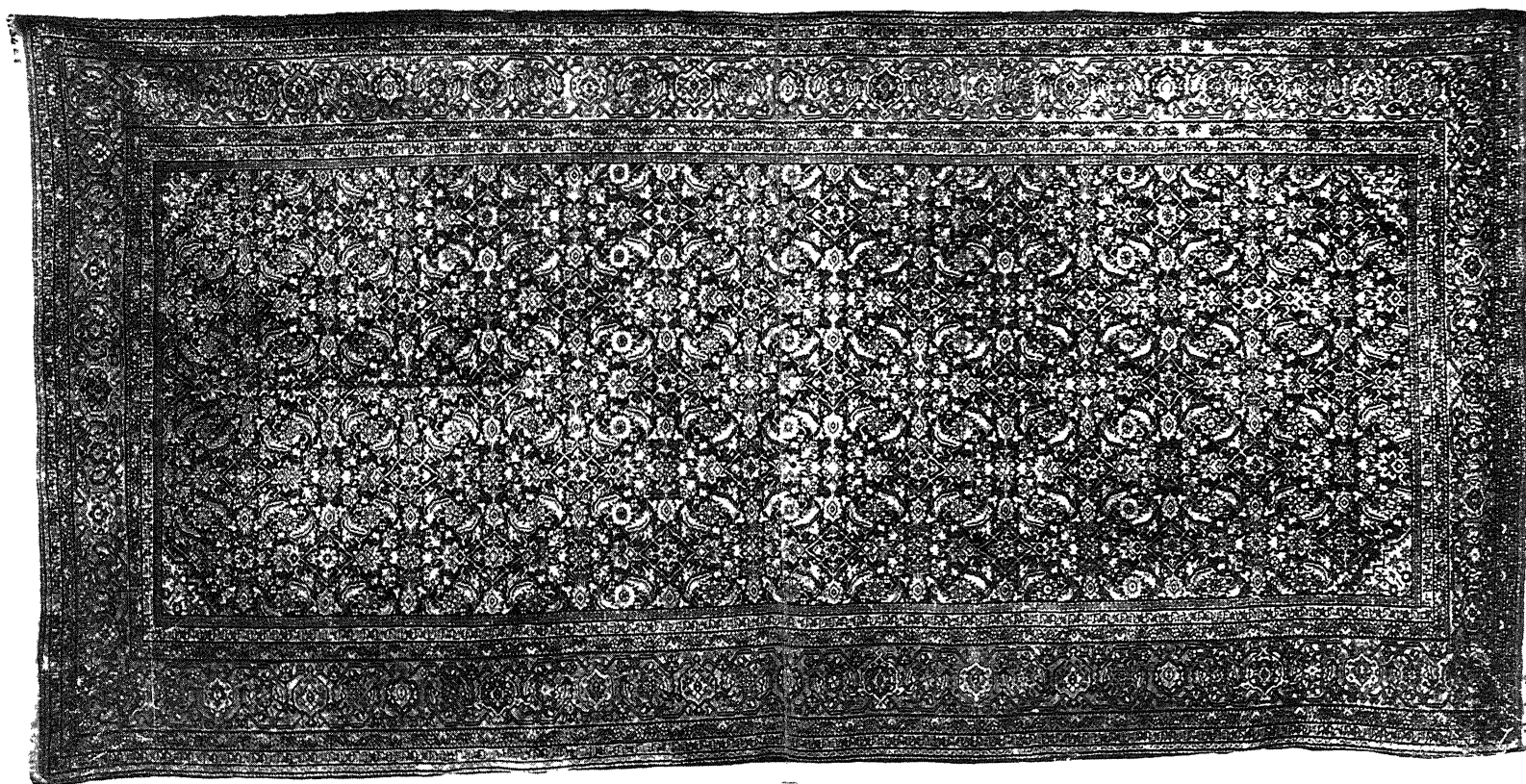


PLATE VIII. A FERAGHAN RUG (WITH "HFRATI" PATTERN)

TYPE ANALYSIS

them from all others with even greater certainty, since it reveals in these rugs a weft of coarse cotton, which crosses but once only, between each row of knots (see Chap. IV., p. 35, Weft Variations).

Field Patterns. "Trellis" work and "Diaper" patterns (the so-called "mirror" design is merely a complex diaper) are common. The central medallion is frequently met with, and the "chain medallion" is a popular motive.

Borders. Simple. Usually three to five stripes. Patterns not distinctive.

Warp (Cotton). All threads lie in the same plane (see p. 32).

Weft. A single coarse thread of cotton crosses once only between each row of knots.

Knot. Ghiordes.

Pile. Largely composed of camel's hair.

PERSIAN RUGS

Weave. Coarse grain and close texture.

Edging. This broad outer edging of plain camel's hair, frequently as wide as the total Border, is a most distinctive and striking feature.

Herats.—They alone, with the rugs of Bijars, combine the features of a coarse weave, and a Ghiordes knot with the "buried thread" system of warp treatment (see Chap. IV., p. 33, *Methods of Warp Treatment*). In addition, the weavers employ a principal Border stripe of a most characteristic and distinctive pattern (see Chap. VI., *Border Stripes*, Fig. 1, p. 85). A small rug is rarely a Herat, since these come, as large square rugs, of carpet size.

Field Patterns. Commonly the "Herati" design or the "pear." The "pear" pattern, when used here, presents one unusual feature, in that the stalks are made to face all one

TYPE ANALYSIS

way, instead of facing in opposite directions, in alternate rows.

Borders.

The pattern of the main stripe is a very characteristic one (see Fig. 1, p. 85), and once seen is not easily mistaken.

Weft.

The treatment of the weft also presents a most unusual feature, since for a space the weft crosses twice between each row of knots, but for the next interval of several rows or more, it will be found crossing three times, and so on, with these alternations continuing throughout the rug.

Knot.

Ghiordes.

Weave.

Coarse grain and close texture.

Pile.

Unusually silky.

Size.

Come usually in carpet size only as large square rugs.

PERSIAN RUGS

Warp (Cotton, Alternate threads are rarely Wool). buried.

Ispahans.—Few rugs are woven there to-day, or have been since the removal of the capital from Ispahan to Shiraz, in 1760, nor are their characteristics sufficiently distinctive to warrant a separate type analysis for these. The tradition of a former greatness still, however, lingers in the East, so that the Persian rug merchant of to-day prefers this name to almost any for his wares. Incidentally my readers will find that “Kashan” is another of those terms so frequently to the tip of his tongue and with which he is inclined at times to take the most unwarrantable liberties. The so-called Ispahans—fifteenth- to seventeenth-century antiques—were more probably woven at Herat, and specimens of these are still to be found upon the market to-day, although their contemporaries, the Animal carpets, Garden carpets, and other masterpieces of that golden age of Persian art, have long since disappeared from private hands into museums and collections of national importance.

TYPE ANALYSIS

These Ispahans, though rare pieces, are still to be met with, and still to be bought, at a price, and, accordingly, it behoves the present-day collector to have some practical knowledge of their distinguishing characteristics, which are as follows :—

Patterns. Very distinctive. Foliage and flower forms on graceful curling stems, combined with a prominent use of the “ Palmette ” and “ cloud band ” motives. The Palmettes are always obvious, but the “ cloud bands ” may be replaced by leaf forms which are long, curling, and serrated, and very graceful.

Colours. Field ground of a deep rose-pink, with patterns in emerald green, and a small quantity of yellow, blue, and white. Principal Border stripe laid in emerald or olive green.

Joshaghans.—Perhaps most easily identified by the negative process of excluding other

PERSIAN RUGS

types, since these rugs are lacking, in any very characteristic or distinctive features. They are, however, fine specimens of Persian workmanship, well woven, of rich, deep mellow colouring, and with a pile of unusual lustre.

<i>Field Patterns.</i>	Generally of the usual floral types. Frequently a trellis-work or diaper pattern, more rarely, the "Herati" or the "pear."
<i>Borders.</i>	Not distinctive. Stripes usually three in number.
<i>Warp.</i>	Alternate threads depressed (see Chap. IV., p. 33). Rarely all are level.
<i>Weft.</i>	Crosses twice between each row of knots.
<i>Knot.</i>	Ghiordes.
<i>Weave.</i>	Medium fine grain and close texture.

Karadagh.—In no other Persian rugs are Caucasian designs so likely to appear, or even on occasions displace, the floral motives of Iran, either in Field or Border.

TYPE ANALYSIS

<i>Field Patterns.</i>	A "Diaper" or "row" pattern is common "Herati" and "pear" seen at times.
<i>Borders.</i>	Not distinctive.
<i>Warp</i> (Wool).	All threads level at the back of the rug.
<i>Weft.</i>	Crosses twice between each row of knots.
<i>Knot.</i>	Ghiordes.
<i>Weave.</i>	Medium coarse grain and close texture.
<i>Finish.</i>	Sides, a two or three-cord "double-overcasting." A simple double-overcasting (one cord) is the general rule for Persian rugs and may be taken as holding good in all cases where nothing to the contrary is stated in the Type Analysis.

Kashans.—In fineness of grain and closeness of texture these rugs are surpassed by no other products of the looms of Persia. With

PERSIAN RUGS

their characteristic designs, their dark, rich colouring, and their notably short and velvety nap, they present a type by no means difficult of identification.

Field Patterns. Floral, flowers in rows or flowers scattered throughout the Field on graceful curling stems, with foliage. A diamond - shaped central medallion, with stepped sides and pendants, is commonly to be found, even in the older specimens, and when present, is very characteristic in appearance.

Borders. Elaborate, and presenting frequently as many as seven stripes.

Warp (Cotton). Alternate warp threads buried (doubled under).

Weft. Fine thread, dyed blue, nearly hidden between the close-pressed rows of knots. Crosses twice.

TYPE ANALYSIS

<i>Knot.</i>	Sehna.
<i>Weave.</i>	Exceedingly fine grain and close texture.
<i>Pile.</i>	Very close trimmed and unusually velvety.
<i>Colouring.</i>	Dark and sombre, but rich.

Sarouks.—For all practical intents and purposes the student may regard these merely as a slightly inferior grade of Kashan.

Kermanshahs.—The colouring of these rugs, with its light tones and its shades principally pink, blue, and ivory, is certainly very distinctive, whilst few other than these exhibit the combination of a Sehna knot with a coarse weave. Their elaborate patterns, too, of Field and Border are noticeable, and their narrow outer edging of plain pink conspicuous, so that altogether they present a general appearance not difficult to recognise.

Field Patterns. Floral scroll work. The central medallion commonly present is elaborately worked, and is usually lobed, and with pendants.

PERSIAN RUGS

- Borders.* Stripe patterns floral and elaborately worked. Principal stripe usually not well marked.
- Warp* (Cotton). Alternate threads doubled under (buried). This is the only Persian rug which combines this system of warp treatment with a coarse weave and a Sehna knot.
- Weft.* Crosses twice between each row of knots.
- Knot.* Sehna.
- Weave.* Medium coarse grain and medium loose texture.
- Edging.* Narrow outer edging of pink surrounding the border.
- Colouring.* Light tones. Shades of blue, pink, ivory, and green.

Khorassans.—The peculiar treatment of the weft and the presence of a typical pattern for the principal Border stripe are the main distinguishing features of Khorassans.

TYPE ANALYSIS

- Field Patterns.* Diverse, but none peculiar to these rugs. The "pear" design when present assumes an unusual form, since each "pear" is elongated in shape as in the Indian variety, and has generally two smaller pears lying at right angles to it.
- Borders.* The design illustrated in Fig. 6, p. 87, is so peculiar to these rugs that it might well be called the Khorassan Border stripe.
- Warp (Cotton).* Alternate threads buried.
- Weft.* The weft crosses twice, and then at intervals three to five times, and so on throughout the rug.
- Knot.* Sehna. This simple fact serves to distinguish them from Herats, which are tied with a Ghiordes knot, and with which they might otherwise be confused since

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE IX

A SHIRAZ RUG (WITH "PEAR" PATTERN)

A choice old Shiraz, displaying a very nice rendering of the well known and oft encountered "pear" (sometimes called cone) pattern. The wide, five-stripe border is particularly well balanced and attractive, and the pattern drawing of the whole piece is of a high standard, which leaves nothing to be desired. The rug is old, and the finishings worn, but the remains of a coloured end web will serve to remind us that a Shiraz is to be recognised as a Shiraz, not so much by its patterns as by its details of Weave and of Finish. (See Type Analysis, p. 77.)

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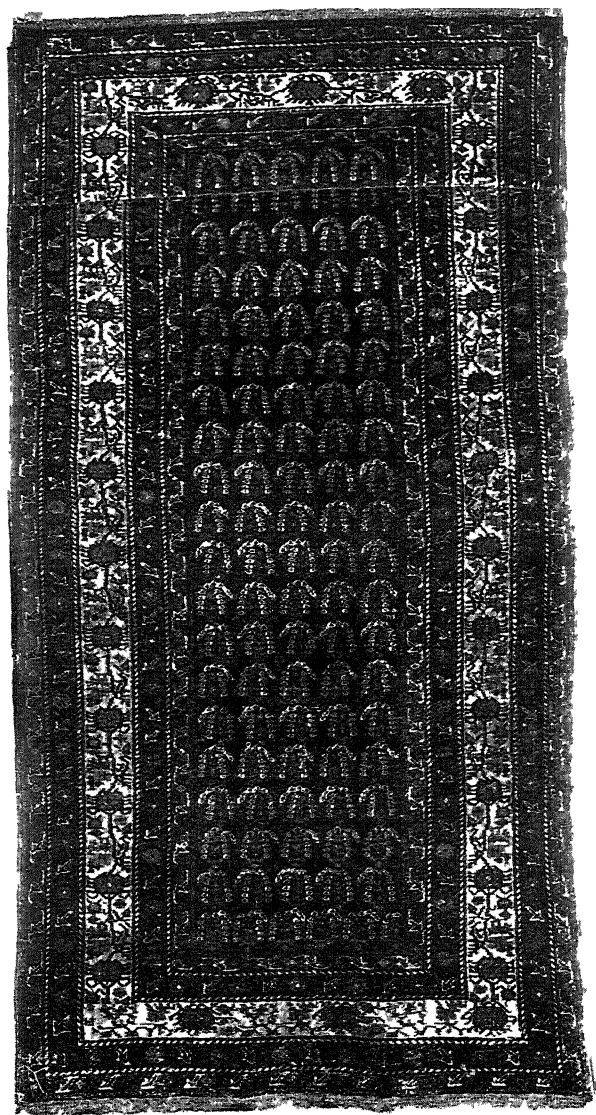


PLATE IX A SHIRAZ RUG (WITH "PEAR" PATTERN)

TYPE ANALYSIS

in each is found this peculiarity of weft variation, whilst both come only in carpet sizes and present an identically silky pile.

Pile. Notably silky, and presenting the appearance of being unevenly trimmed.

Weave. Medium fine grain and close texture.

Size. Generally in large sizes.

Colouring. Some of their shades such as purple and magenta are rarely seen in other Persian rugs. Rose-pinks, blues, and cream are favourite colours, but the general effects are rich rather than light.

Kirmans.—Few rugs could be more distinctive than the old Kirmans, with their gorgeous red roses of Field and Border, but the moderns, alas ! follow other traditions, with shades and patterns resembling those of Kermanshah, and

PERSIAN RUGS

are only at times to be distinguished from them by their closer weave and superior workmanship.

Field Patterns.

The red rose, with graceful natural drawing and shaded petals, is the favourite device of the old Kirmani weavers, and so drawn, is the hall-mark of their work.

The modern pieces resemble those of Kerman-shah, but are usually without the floral scroll work, and a central medallion is rarely missing.

Borders.

In the old pieces the red roses of the Field are to be seen also in the pattern of the principal Border stripe, the ground colour of which may be at times the richest and deepest of golden yellows.

In later pieces the borders are not distinctive.

TYPE ANALYSIS

<i>Warp</i> (Cotton).	Alternate threads are buried.
<i>Weft.</i>	Crosses twice between each row of knots.
<i>Knot.</i>	Sehna.
<i>Weave.</i>	Fine grain and close texture.
<i>Edging.</i>	A narrow outer edging of plain colour, usually pink, sometimes green, surrounds the Border.

Kurdistans.—A distinctive peculiarity of Kurdish weavers is their habit of shading the blue grounds of their Fields. They are very consistent also in the simplicity of their Borders, which commonly consist of three stripes, and constant in the range of their Field patterns.

In colour they exhibit a fondness for brown, which is a favourite with few Persian weavers.

Field Patterns. The “ Mina Khani ” is the favourite design, but the “ Herati ” is often used, and the “ pear ” too, but still

PERSIAN RUGS

more rarely so. "Diaper" patterns are in high favour, and "row" designs also, especially of flowering shrubs.

- Borders.* Simple in pattern and arrangement. Usually consist of three stripes only.
- Warp* (Wool, rarely Cotton). Generally all threads are level at the back, but in some specimens alternate warp threads are depressed.
- Weft.* Coarse wool, crossing twice between each row of knots, but in some untypical specimens, once only.
- Knot.* Ghiordes.
- Weave.* Coarse grain and close texture.
- Finish.* The end-webs are coloured and braided, in some specimens.
- Shape.* These rugs come frequently in the form of "runners," that is, in long narrow shapes.

TYPE ANALYSIS

Colouring. Sombre and subdued. Few rugs exhibit so marked a preference for brown, or so invariable a use of blue, for the colour of the ground of the Field.

Laristans.—In details of weave and finish these resemble the rugs of Shiraz, and can only be separated from them in the case of specimens showing the typical Laristan pattern and colouring. This pattern consists of “pears” for the Field, and for the principal Border stripe the “pear” design, illustrated in Fig. 5, p. 85, whilst in colouring, a rich apricot red in the Border is complementary to a blue of a distinctly purplish shade for the ground colour of the Field.

Meshed.—Perhaps most easily to be identified by the negative process of excluding other types, since they themselves present no peculiarly distinctive or characteristic features. They belong to the comparatively small group of rugs which come only in carpet sizes, a fact which considerably limits our field of research

PERSIAN RUGS

and renders our task by no means usually a difficult one.

<i>Field Patterns.</i>	Diverse. None distinctive.
<i>Borders.</i>	Elaborate. Usually more than five stripes.
<i>Warp</i> (Cotton).	Alternate threads buried.
<i>Weft.</i>	Crosses twice between each row of knots.
<i>Knot.</i>	Ghiordes or Sehna.
<i>Pile.</i>	Notably silky.
<i>Weave.</i>	Medium coarse grain and close texture.
<i>Edging.</i>	Most specimens show a narrow outer edging of plain colour surrounding the Border.
<i>Size.</i>	No small rugs, only large sizes.
<i>Colouring.</i>	Light tones, principally shades of pink, blue, and ivory.

Mosul.—Not distinguishable by any single peculiarity, but by the aggregate of their details. They belong to that group of rugs

TYPE ANALYSIS

which combine a Ghiordes knot with a coarse and close weave, and in which alternate warp threads are neither depressed nor buried, but all appear equally prominent upon the back of the rug.

Field Patterns. Diverse. None peculiarly distinctive.

On some specimens geometrical designs and Caucasian devices may at times be found, whilst the "pear" when present may assume either the Persian or geometrical form.

Many specimens follow Kurdish traditions, with their all-over repetitive patterns, their shaded blue Field grounds, their simple Borders and their sombre colouring, and such have at times to be dismissed as "Mosul-Kurdish" for want of more definite evidence.

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PLATE X

A GOREVAN RUG

(See Type Analysis, p. 49, Chap. V.)

The concentric central medallions, the heavy, archaic, angular drawing of leaf and foliage, the "Turtle" border stripe, these are details easy to recognise, and presenting in the aggregate a picture that makes these rugs for the most part by no means difficult of identification.

In one so typical as our present specimen the above research is ample, but we must not therefore forget that we have always additional resources at our command in cases of need, such, for example, as considerations of colour, and the details of weave which a study of our detailed type analysis will enable us to practise.

Gorevans in small sizes are rarely met with, but this is one of them, and a very nice old specimen too.

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PLATE X. A GOREVAN RUG.

TYPE ANALYSIS

<i>Borders.</i>	Simple in pattern and arrangement. Three stripes.
<i>Warp</i> (Wool).	All threads level at the back of the rug.
<i>Weft.</i>	Coarse wool, frequently dyed blue, and crossing twice between each row of knots. In very occasional pieces the weft crosses once only.
<i>Knot.</i>	Ghiordes.
<i>Pile.</i>	Rarely a certain amount of camel's hair is used in this.
<i>Weave.</i>	Coarse grain and close texture.
<i>Edging.</i>	An outer edging of plain colour is to be found in some of these rugs.

Niris.—Alternate warp threads are depressed, and the texture slightly firmer, but in other respects the weavers conform to the practice of their neighbours of Shiraz. (For details see Type Analysis, Shiraz, p. 77.)

Sarabends.—The absence of a well-marked

PERSIAN RUGS

principal stripe, and the division of the Border into a large number of comparatively narrow ones give to typical specimens of these rugs a very characteristic appearance.

The “ pear ” is their favourite device, and is in use both in Field and Border.

Field Patterns. Almost without exception an “ all - over ” “ pear ” pattern.

Borders. Elaborate, and consisting usually of seven or more stripes of comparatively narrow width, whilst the main stripe is altogether absent or poorly marked.

Warp (Cotton). Alternate threads are buried. More rarely all warp threads are equally prominent at the back of the rug.

Weft. Crosses twice between each row of knots.

Knot. Sehna.

Weave. Medium fine grain and close texture.

TYPE ANALYSIS

Shape. Come frequently in the form of runners, *i.e.* in long, narrow shapes.

Sarouks.—These may be regarded merely as a slightly inferior grade of Kashan, and for details see Type Analysis of Kashan rugs, p. 59.

Sehnas.—No other Persian rug possesses such distinctive characteristics, or is more easy to identify. The weft, of fine cotton, crossing but once between each row of knots, might alone give to the connoisseur all the information that he required ; but, in addition, there are several other points of sufficient interest to deserve attention. In these specimens all warp threads lie at the same level on the back of the rug, but in all others, which combine a Sehna knot with a weave of notably fine grain and close texture, alternate warp threads are buried.

The Field patterns are consistent, being limited practically to the " Herati " and the " pear," and are remarkable for the delicacy and elaboration of their drawing.

The nap is very short, and the rugs themselves the thinnest of all the Persian group.

PERSIAN RUGS

- Field Patterns.* Commonly the "Herati," more rarely the "pear."
- Borders.* Simple and floral. Usually three stripes.
- Warp.* All threads lie at the same level on the back of the rug.
- Weft.* Fine cotton, and crosses but once only between each row of knots.
- Knot.* Sehna. Frequently four or five hundred to the square inch, but at times, and especially in antiques, specimens may be encountered which show 700 or 800 knots to the square inch.
- Pile.* Close trimmed.
- Weave.* Very fine grain and close texture.
- Size.* These come for the most part in small sizes, and it is very rare to encounter a large rug of this weave.

Sirapis.—These, and the rugs of Herez,

TYPE ANALYSIS

belong to the Gorevan group, and for details see Gorevans (Type Analysis), p. 49.

Shiraz.—Their weavers favour coloured end-webs, and for the sides a “double-over-casting” in short lengths of different colours, thus producing an appearance which has been likened to a barber’s pole.

These peculiarities of finish, added to the fact that in many specimens small tufts of wool project from the sides at intervals, cause these rugs to be unusually easy of identification.

The wool of the pile is soft and fleecy, and their reds and blues for depth and clarity unsurpassed by any Eastern rug.

Field Patterns. Diverse, but none peculiarly distinctive, the “pear” being as common as any, and the “chain medallion” not infrequently encountered. In no other Persian rug are “combs,” “octagons,” or others of the adventitious designs of the Caucasus so likely to appear, whilst the “geometrical

PERSIAN RUGS

Shiraz " is a well recognised if not very common type.

Borders. Not distinctive, usually five or more stripes.

Warp. All threads level, that is, equally prominent, on the back of the rug.

Weft. Wool dyed pink, and crossing twice between each row of knots.

Pile. Notably soft and fleecy.

Weave. Medium coarse grain and loose texture.

Knot. Sehna or Ghiordes.

Finish. (a) Ends. Coloured end-webs.

(b) Sides. A " double-overcasting " in short lengths of different coloured yarns. In many specimens small tufts of wool project at intervals from the sides.

Tabriz.—In the weavings of Tabriz alone we find a close weave of fine grain and the

TYPE ANALYSIS

“buried thread” system of warp treatment combined with a Ghiordes knot, a combination which serves absolutely to distinguish them from others.

These rugs come in large sizes only.

Field Patterns. None peculiarly distinctive, but a central medallion is rarely missing.

Borders. “Cartouches” containing inscriptions in Persian are not uncommon in the principal Border stripe.

Warp. Alternate threads are buried.

Weft. Crosses twice between each row of knots. Usually undyed or pink.

Knot. Ghiordes.

Pile. Very short, and neither silky nor velvety, but harsh to the touch.

Weave. Fine grain and very close texture.

Size. These rugs come only in large sizes.

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE XI

A KURDISH RUG (WITH MINA KHANI PATTERN)

This glorious old piece furnishes us with a striking example of the height to which even a mechanical design such as the Mina Khani can be raised, when treated by a master of his art. At a first glance it is difficult to believe that this is nothing more than an artistic and elaborate rendering of the pattern described on p. 16, Fig. 2, but a closer scrutiny will easily convince us that the essentials of each are indeed identical, and provide us with an excellent demonstration of the wisdom of carefully analysing and dissecting our specimens.

The photograph, though uncoloured, shows very well that shading of the dark ground of the Field, which is so consistent a feature in weavings of Kurdish origin.

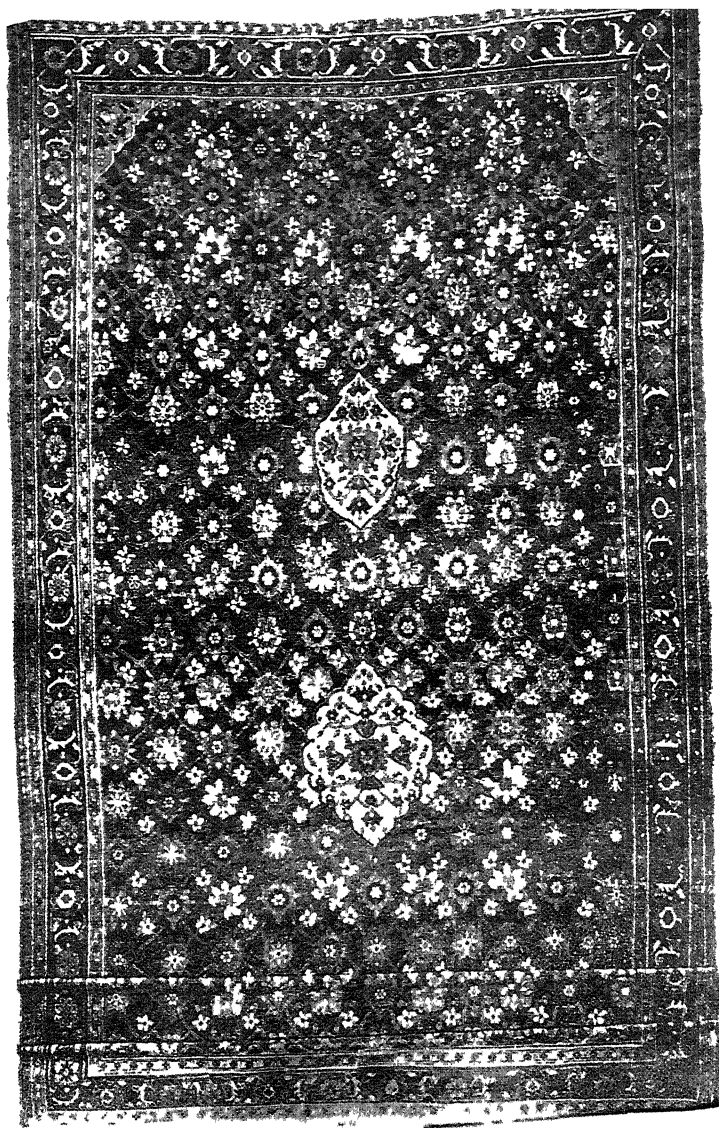


PLATE XI. A KURDISH RUG (MINA KHANI DESIGN).

CHAPTER VI

PERSIAN BORDER STRIPES AND THEIR PATTERNS

It has been already noted that the borders of Persian rugs are divided up into a number of relatively small divisions termed "stripes," of which we can recognise three distinct and separate varieties, namely, "main" stripes, "subsidiary" stripes, and "line" stripes.

(a) The *Main Stripe* or *Principal Border Stripe*.—This is the comparatively wide and important stripe occupying the centre of the Border, and surrounded on each side by narrower stripes. It is a feature seldom missing altogether, though its relative size and importance varies with the local traditions of the district in which the rug was woven.

Its pattern is frequently distinctive, and may at times furnish us with valuable information concerning the identity of any given specimen.

PERSIAN RUGS

(b) *Subsidiary Stripes*.—These are the relatively narrow stripes surrounding the main stripe, themselves varying in size, but each of sufficient width to bear some simple pattern or design.

(c) *Line Stripes*.—These are of no practical importance, the term merely including all those stripes of insufficient width to bear a pattern.

From the above information it will be easily gathered that a study of the general arrangement of the Border stripes, though of less importance than the consideration of pattern, is nevertheless a subject worthy of more than a passing notice.

Continuing further with this study we shall learn that the borders of the rugs of Kurdistan weavers are notable for their simplicity of pattern and arrangement, the stripes being usually three in number and consisting of a main stripe surrounded on each side by a subsidiary stripe, the designs of the latter being in many cases identical, a feature not so frequently seen in other weavings. We shall note that the rugs of Sehna, Mosul, Bijar, and

BORDER STRIPES

Hamadan belong to a group whose simple Border stripes rarely exceed five in number, but are usually three, whilst on the other hand, the borders of Kashans, Feraghans, Kermanshahs, and Herats are more elaborate, and seldom number less than six. It will be noted as a peculiarity of Sarabends, that in these it is common to find the main stripe absent, or poorly marked, and the stripes, as many as nine or ten in number ; whilst in Kermanshahs also, at times, the main stripe may be comparatively narrow and of less than usual importance.

The above details and others of sufficient interest will be found chronicled in our detailed type analysis of the characteristics of the various rugs (see Chap. V., Type Analysis of Persian Rugs), and are here repeated, in narrative form, to emphasise the value of any details which can serve as a standard of comparison between specimens, and to demonstrate the true significance of facts which in themselves might appear trivial, and which, if regarded merely as isolated items of knowledge, might well be neglected or entirely overlooked. The

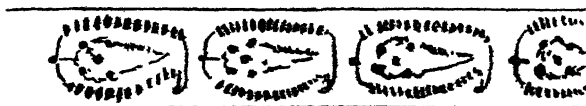
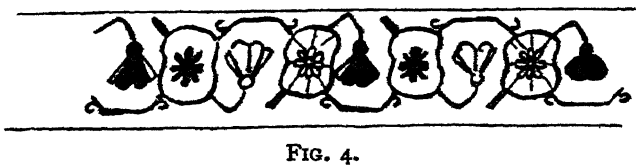
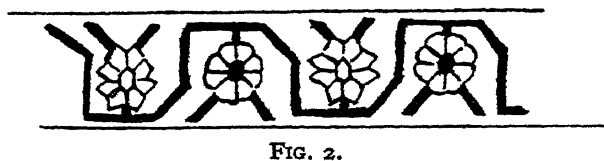
PERSIAN RUGS

chief interest of the Border, however, as we have already noticed, centres in its stripe patterns, and the remainder of the chapter will be devoted exclusively to this subject. Below will be found, discussed in detail, illustrated by diagrams, and numbered for the sake of convenience of reference, a series of the more distinctive and frequently to be encountered Persian Border stripes. A study of the patterns of subsidiary stripes is not of sufficient importance to merit a detailed investigation, and might well be altogether omitted, were it not for the consideration that, since encountered they must be, it is of more interest perhaps to meet them as old friends, rather than as strangers, and a few of the better marked have accordingly been included amongst our illustrations.

Principal Border Stripes.

1. This is the well-known " Herat " stripe, found in most Herats, but seldom elsewhere. Its elements consist of a " swaying vine " (*a*), from the inner side of each bend of which is suspended some dependent " rosette " or flower form. The characteristic feature of the

BORDER STRIPES



PRINCIPAL BORDER STRIPES.

PERSIAN RUGS

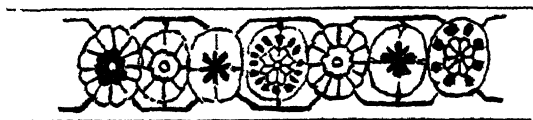
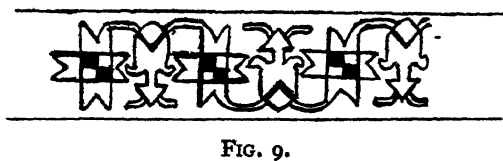
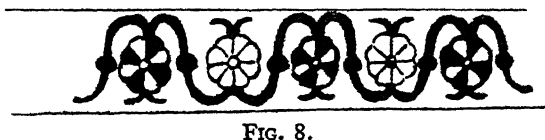
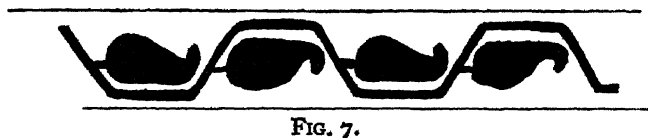
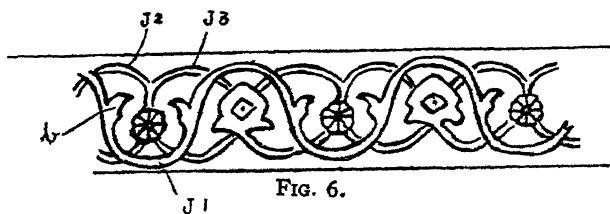
stripe consists in the treatment of the "vine" itself, the sides of the flexures of which are expanded and the edge serrated, to present an appearance which somewhat approximates to a leaf form (*b*). The general appearance produces the effect of a series of "rosettes" depending from arches and surrounded on each side by a serrated leaf, so that its analogy to the "Herati" Field pattern must be obvious.

2. A simple stripe of the type so frequently seen in Kurdish rugs, it displays a plain unornamented "vine" with a rosette pendent from each bend. The arches of the vine meander it will be noticed are here angular in shape, in place of the usual curved form.

3. This is the so-called "Turtle" pattern, which is so consistently employed in the weavings of Feraghan and Gorevan, as to be almost distinctive of these rugs.

4. A simple and beautiful alternate rosette and bud design, which is a great favourite with the weavers of the Shiraz district.

5. A "pear" pattern, frequently to be found in typical specimens of the rugs of Laristan. The "swaying vine" meander, it



PRINCIPAL BORDER STRIPES.

PERSIAN RUGS

will be noticed, is absent in this particular design.

6. A very distinctive stripe pattern peculiar to the rugs of Khorassan, and seldom missing from the borders of these. The use of a triple vine ($J_1 J_2 J_3$) gives an appearance resembling that of interlacing arabesques, whilst the hook-like projections (*b*) in shape somewhat like a bird's head and beak, are most noticeable and characteristic.

7. A "pear" pattern by no means uncommon in Sarabends, the "pears" projecting, in this case, from the inner sides of the flexures of an angular vine meander. Alternate pears may be replaced by "rosette" forms.

8. Another simple example of a "vine" with pendants, illustrated from an old Kurdish rug.

9. A beautiful stripe pattern, drawn from an old Mosul. The "vine" can be easily traced, and here will be noticed also the presence of the "eight-pointed star."

10. This is an example of an elaborate border stripe of the Sarouk or Kashan type. It demonstrates particularly well—as indeed

BORDER STRIPES

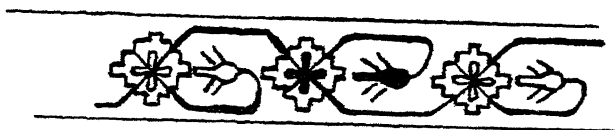


FIG. 12.

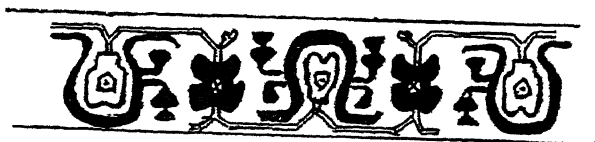


FIG. 13.

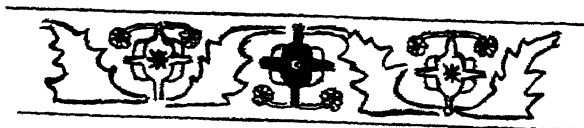


FIG. 14.



FIG. 15.



FIG. 16.



FIG. 17

PRINCIPAL BORDER STRIPES.

PERSIAN RUGS

do most Persian Border designs—that “ continuity of pattern ” so true to Persian ideal.

11. A border stripe encountered at times in Hamadans, whilst a similar pattern is seen in Bijars, but less elaborately drawn and without any trace of a “ vine ” at all.

12. Another “ vine ” pattern of a slightly different form, illustrated from an old Shiraz rug.

13. A main stripe pattern sometimes seen in the rugs of Herez (Gorevan group). The “ cloud bands ” are obvious here, and the archaic forms and heavy angular drawing noticeable.

14. Another elaborate type stripe pattern from a Kashan rug. The vine here strongly suggests an arabesque.

15. A double vine meander design, a simple and effective stripe pattern of a type particularly in favour with those weavers who prefer simplicity to elaborateness in the treatment of their Borders. Such a stripe then will not be found in Kashans, Sarouks, Feraghans, Kirmans, or Kermanshahs, but rather in the rugs of Mosul, Hamadan, and Kurdistan, and the like.

BORDER STRIPES

16. A "pear" pattern of yet another variety, and displaying in this instance "pears" of that elongated Indian shape which we associate also with the rugs of Khorassan.

A design of this type is occasionally to be seen in the borders of either Khorassans or Herats, and takes the place of the patterns (Figs. 6 and 1) which have been noted as characteristic of the principal stripes of these weavings.

17. On those occasions when the "Turtle" pattern is missing from the borders of an old Feraghan its place is frequently taken by a stripe of this variety. The author has quite frequently encountered this design in old Joshaghan rugs also, but has seen it nowhere else.

Subsidiary Border Stripes (of Persian Rugs) :

1. The swaying "vine" meander itself, without ornamentation or pendants.

2. The "vine" ornamented, but without pendants, a graceful stripe, and a favourite with Kurdish weavers. Outside the Persian group this stripe is quite frequently to be encountered

PERSIAN RUGS

in antique Koula (Turkish group) Prayer rugs, though I have seen it nowhere else.

3. A simple vine meander with pendent rosettes, a typical Persian stripe pattern.

4. A "vine" with pendants and with the sides of its flexures expanded and ornamented with a serrated edge. Frequently seen, but particularly common in the rugs of Shiraz and the surrounding district.

5. A "pear" pattern stripe with the "pears" projecting from the inner sides of the flexures of an angular vine. More frequently in stripes of this pattern alternate pears are replaced by rosette forms.

6. A reciprocal "saw-tooth" design. It will be remembered that in Feraghan rugs the innermost Border stripe almost invariably bears this pattern.

7. A second variety.

8. The reciprocal "trefoil" is a pattern device especially common in the rugs of Mosul and Bijars, but otherwise less frequently encountered in the rugs of Persia, than those of other groups. In high favour in the rugs of the Caucasus, this design may even on

BORDER STRIPES



FIG. 1.

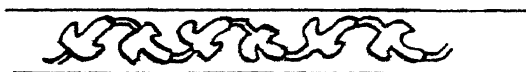


FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.

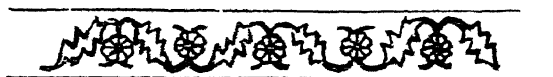


FIG. 4.

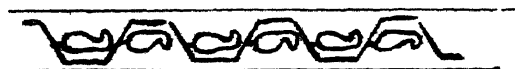


FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.



FIG. 8.

SUBSIDIARY BORDER STRIPES.

PERSIAN RUGS

occasions appear as the pattern of the principal stripe.

9. A simple "vine" meander of angular type with pendent rosettes.

10. A vine of a similar type, but with projecting leaf forms.

11. A pattern stripe taken from an old Shiraz rug. The vine continuous through alternate diamond and leaf forms.

12. A simple vine with pendants.

13. A reciprocal stripe pattern to be found at times in Mosul rugs.

14. Yet another type of vine.

15. A pretty and typical stripe pattern with a wide distribution. A similar design somewhat elaborated, is at times encountered doing duty as the pattern of a principal Border stripe.

To include a review of all the varieties of Border patterns that may be met with would prove a task beyond the scope of illustration, but, at least, the selected examples should prove of interest, especially so in those instances where the design itself is sufficiently distinctive in character to identify the rug in which it appears.

BORDER STRIPES



FIG. 9.



FIG. 10.

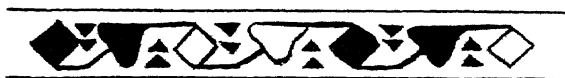


FIG. 11



FIG. 12.



FIG. 13



FIG. 14.



FIG. 15

SUBSIDIARY BORDER STRIPES.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS WITH REGARD TO AGE, MERIT, AND VALUE

As we review the ground that has been covered we shall notice that those "standards of comparison" with which we have been at such pains to provide ourselves, will not only assist us to compare our specimens with regard to the variations due to differences of type, but will aid us equally in the comparison of rugs of similar type, but of different age and quality.

The former proposition represents the problem of "rug identification" with which we have already dealt, the latter, that of "rug classification," with which we propose to deal now, and to both, the same methods of elucidation apply.

To demonstrate the differences due to

CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS

type, we compared our specimens, detail by detail; to demonstrate those due to variations of age and quality, we must adopt the same procedure and carry out the same detailed and comparative analysis.

Considerations of pattern, colouring, material, and workmanship, all these we have as standards of comparison, and it is from a study of these, together with certain general considerations, that we form our ultimate opinions with regard to age, merit, and value.

(a) Pattern.—The old designs may be more or less faithfully copied, but the object of the modern weaver is to save labour, and this spirit is reflected in his pattern rendering. He changes his wools as seldom as possible, he leaves undecorated large spaces of plain colour—labour savers, as the Americans aptly term them—and upon the same principle prefers a large coarse rendering to a small and fine one. Elaboration, on the other hand, is the keynote of the pattern drawing of the older weavings, plain spaces are filled with small designs, time and trouble are matters apparently of no consideration. Central

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE XII

AN ISPAHAN RUG

Our specimen is one of those famous "so-called" Ispahans, which were in reality more probably made at Herat, and is easily to be recognised by the typical palmette forms and cloud bands (see p. 22, Fig. 16, and p. 19, Fig. 6) which it displays. Its principal Border stripe shows an interlacing Arabesque design, whose triple nature and protecting beak-like processes strongly suggest that it is a prototype of the well-known Khorassan stripe pattern of later days. (See p. 87, Fig. 6.)

This is an early piece—fifteenth century probably—and consequently we miss the greater elaborateness of the later period, and the long, curling, spear-shaped, serrated leaf forms which are usually to be found in the rugs of that date.

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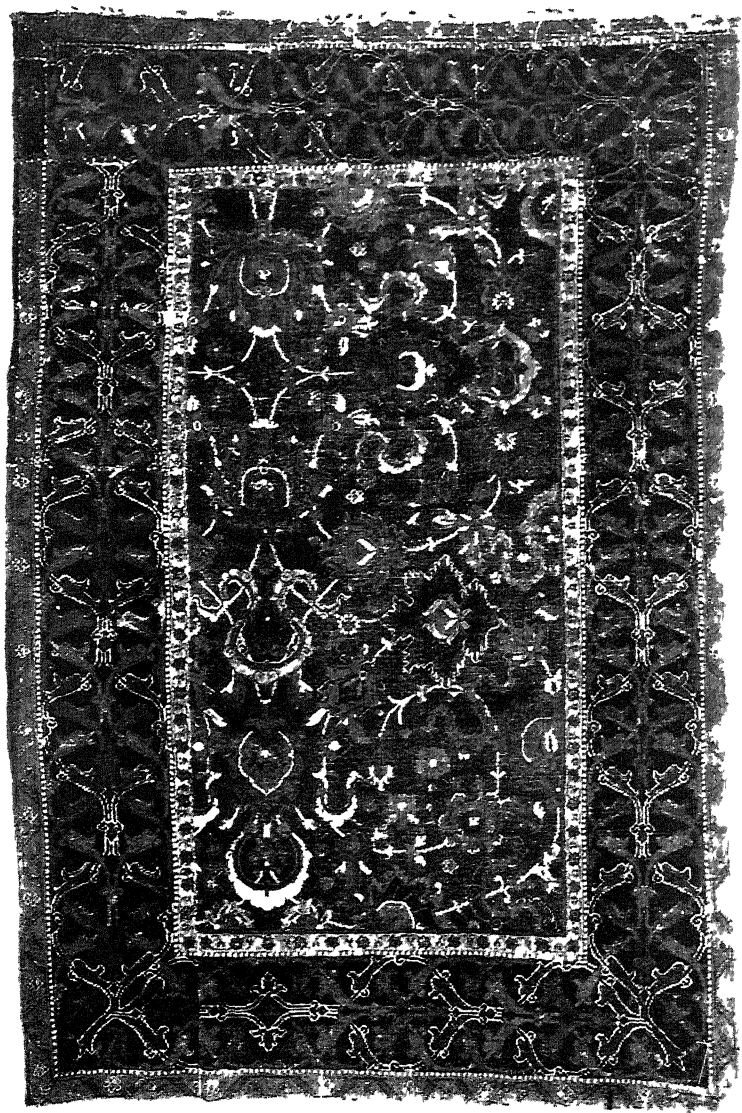


PLATE XII AN ISPAHAN RUG

CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS

medallions are to be found at times in rugs of every age, but are an increasingly common feature amongst moderns.

(b) Colouring.—Modern rugs, even those of excellent quality, are but too frequently aniline dyed, and these dyes not being “fast” may be tested for by rubbing the surface with a damp cloth or handkerchief, when the colours will stain the handkerchief. The experienced collector, however, will have no need of any such expedients, since he will not fail to recognise the distinctive shades and tones of these dyes, or to remark that slight blurring of the edges of the design which tells of the “running” of neighbouring colours.

Old rugs are without exception vegetable dyed, and not a little of their beauty is due to the benevolent action of time, which greatly enhances the merits of these fine old dyes and produces a richness and mellowness of colouring not to be obtained in any other way.

Certain shades, such as the old Persian blue—now a lost art—rose-pink, wine-red, and old ivory, are tones not to be found in modern productions, even when these are vegetable dyed.

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(c) **Materials.**—For the warp threads of the moderns coarse brown wool may take the place of creamy white, or cotton may be found where once wool only was employed. Much of the superiority of the older fabric consists in the superiority of the materials used, and the lustrous sheen and rich mellow appearance of surface which characterise these pieces can only be produced by time and wear upon a pile of fine quality.

Attempts are made by chemical washing to imitate the effects of age, but the results, though at times by no means unbeautiful, are quite inadequate, and fall so far short of the “real thing” that they should deceive none but the tyro.

(d) **Workmanship.**—Here we find the same tale of degeneration. In the older pieces it is rare to find any evidences of trashy workmanship or faulty technique, and the backs of these specimens, with their hard woven, level surface and even rows of knots, present an appearance hardly less characteristic and instructive than their faces.

So well are these old rugs woven that they

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will wear literally down to the knot, and so excellent is the construction of their foundation that it will persist undamaged when in places the knots themselves have completely disappeared.

When comparing specimens of similar type we may with advantage make a comparison between the "number of knots to the square inch" which each displays; the greater number of knots denoting in this case the better weave. We shall, however, take this occasion of warning our readers against the fallacy involved in attempting to discriminate by this method between the merits of rugs of different types, since each type will display of necessity a different weaving technique, and the "number of knots to the inch" will be as much dependent upon the technique employed as upon the quality of the weaving.

(e) General Considerations :

1. *Quality*.—As a general principle it may be fairly stated that the modern rug is never in every detail, and frequently in none, the equal of the older specimen; a fact which is hardly surprising when we consider the different

PERSIAN RUGS

conditions under which each was woven. The one, a labour of love and the product of individual inspiration ; the other, a task undertaken for hire, at best the soulless copy of the genius of another, and the product of a commercial system whose motto “tempus fugit” deals so frequently alas the death-blow to high ideal and conscientious workmanship.

2. *Type*.—Rugs that are nondescripts, and cannot after careful examination be consigned to any recognised type, should always be regarded with suspicion ; since the old pieces are for the most part remarkably consistent to type, and seldom depart from the traditions of their district of manufacture, with regard to pattern, technique of weave, and choice of materials. Regarding the latter we have already mentioned the fact that in moderns the use of cotton for the warp threads may supplant the use of wool, but we must caution our readers against necessarily regarding the presence of a cotton warp as an evidence of modernity, since this is actually a type characteristic of many of the finest old rugs—especially when town woven—since the old-

CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS

time weavers not unnaturally preferred the materials most conveniently to hand, cotton for the Town Dweller, wool for the Shepherd Nomad.

3. *Condition*.—Owing to varying circumstances one rug may be subjected in a year to the same amount of wear that another will receive in fifty, and we must remember this when we are inclined to over-emphasise the value of “condition” as a guide to age. The making of new rugs into old has been for many years a trade of the East, as well as the West, and production of the required “condition” is always a matter of comparative simplicity. One fact, however, it may serve us well to remember, and that is, that old rugs are invariably limp and flexible, retaining no vestige of their original stiffness. It is true that because a rug possesses this quality we cannot therefore know for certain that it is a genuine antique, but, at least, we can say that unless it possesses it, it is certainly not an old piece.

Apropos of condition, intending purchasers should always be careful to examine their pieces

PERSIAN RUGS

by having them held up to the light, when frequently numerous rents and mends will be made apparent in specimens that appear without blemish as they lie upon the floor.

4. *Individuality*.—Old rugs show individual touches, slight variations in colouring and pattern drawing which will not be found in modern pieces, since these are merely commercial products and approximate but too closely to the machine-made article.

Frequently the old-time weaver, greatly fearing the “Evil Eye,” strove to avert it from his precious work, breaking the absolute symmetry of his all too perfect pattern by the introduction of some small adventitious design, thrown in apparently haphazard and producing a most characteristic and personal touch.

Rug Valuation.—The value of a rug is dependent chiefly on three main factors, namely, upon its Type, upon its Age, and upon its Quality, and in accurately gauging these factors we have accomplished by far the larger and more onerous portion of the task of rug valuation, a problem which will at times tax

CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS

to the full all the skill and knowledge acquired by careful study.

When we have successfully identified and properly classified our specimen, its value is nothing more nor less than its current price in the saleroom and auction mart, an item of knowledge most easily to be acquired by an excursion into these domains or through the medium of priced catalogues.

It is an item of knowledge requiring constant revision, the old rugs are becoming scarce, and dealers now fully realise that the supply is limited ; prices have trebled within the last ten years, and may be expected to advance to considerably higher levels, since the demand for these pieces is increasing rapidly.

For country readers undoubtedly the most convenient method of learning values and studying current prices is through the medium of priced catalogues, and our succeeding chapter (Sale Values) is chiefly composed of a number of priced items from recent London rug sales, a method which we have adopted as the best at our disposal for imparting to our readers at least a little clear and definite knowledge.

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PLATE XIII

A HAMADAN RUG

A fine old antique Hamadan with so-called mirror pattern, and central "chain" medallion. Note the broad outer edging of plain, shaded camel's hair, which gives so distinctive an appearance to these pieces, and also the ground of the Field which is of the material.

Observe also that the characters of rug, though themselves largely geometrical, are nevertheless, linked together to give that continuity of pattern, which is one of the most distinctive features of Persian workmanship.

The principal Border stripe shows a double vine pattern of the variety described on p. 89, Fig. 15. The diagram there shown was itself drawn from just such another fine old Hamadan as the one reproduced here.



PLATE XIII. A HAMADAN RUG.

CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS

With regard to this subject we cannot too strongly urge upon our readers that they must learn to know the rugs themselves before they can really learn to know their values ; nor can we over-emphasise the fact that in achieving the ability to correctly identify and classify specimens they will have acquired the chief essential of successful and accurate rug valuation.

CHAPTER VIII

SALE VALUES

THE following examples of Sale Values may prove of interest, these having been specially selected, for the most part, from recent auction sales, but a few from dealers' stocks. These instances have been personally collected by the author himself, and he is consequently able to amplify their catalogue descriptions and to add such notes as should greatly increase their value for purposes of practical instruction.

No. 1. Shiraz rug with cone (*i.e.* pear) ornament in green, red, and yellow, upon a dark-blue ground. Border stripes in old rose-pink and ivory-white.

5 ft. 9 in. \times 3 ft. 9 in. 26 guineas

This specimen was of very excellent quality, about eighty years old, and in first-rate

SALE VALUES

condition. The colouring was particularly fine and rich, and the pile of exceptional quality and lustre.

On the whole, a very desirable collector's piece, and cheap at anything under £30.

No. 2. A pair of Kurdish runners with Herati pattern in rose-pink and green upon a shaded dark-blue ground.

10 ft. 6 in. \times 3 ft. £24

These were fine specimens of the work of thirty years ago, not quite old enough perhaps to excite the collector's interest, but, nevertheless, pieces of considerable merit and approximating to the old standards. They might have been considered cheap at £15 apiece.

No. 3. An Ispahan rug with foliage and rosettes in colours on red ground, and foliage on dark-green ground border.

7 ft. \times 4 ft. 5 in. (17th century) £210

This is the catalogue description of this piece, and hardly a good one. The "rosettes" were certainly palmettes, and some of the "foliage" arabesques. The specimen was without doubt one of the well-known "so-

PERSIAN RUGS

called " Ispahans, but was late in period, probably early eighteenth century, and of comparatively poor quality.

No. 4. Another Ispahan of much the same period and quality, with a red ground Field and arabesques on a dark-blue ground border.

5 ft. 6 in. \times 3 ft. 9 in. .. £180

No. 5. A Kashan rug with a design of the Tree of Life on a buff ground with silk introduced into the design in small panels, and arabesques round the border on a brown ground.

6 ft. 3 in. \times 4 ft. 6 in. .. £84

The catalogue description hardly reads like that which my readers have been taught to expect of a Kashan rug, and this was certainly a very untypical specimen. On a casual inspection of colouring and general appearance one would certainly have pronounced it to be a Kirman rug, but a close examination of the details of weave definitely established its true identity. This was a fine old piece somewhere about sixty years old, of excellent quality and workmanship, and in good condition.

No. 6. A Kurdish rug with pear (cone)

SALE VALUES

ornament in yellow and brown upon a dark-blue shaded ground.

6 ft. \times 4 ft. 3 in. £22

A nice old specimen about thirty or forty years old, made by the Kurds around Mosul. Not an elaborate piece, but one of good quality and workmanship, and in first-rate condition.

No. 7. A Shiraz rug with pear design in old rose-pink upon a dark-blue ground, border in old rose-pink.

5 ft. 6 in. \times 3 ft. 6 in. .. £25

A lovely old piece of similar age and quality to No. 1. Though well worn it was in beautiful condition, and was exceedingly cheap at anything under £30.

It is just the rugs of this age and quality which are appreciating so very rapidly in value to-day.

At an age of eighty years, or thereabouts, they are on the border-line between old rugs and antiques—it being usual to reckon as antiques only those over one hundred years old—but their beauty and rapidly increasing scarcity are matters concerning which there could be little question.

PERSIAN RUGS

No. 8. A Gorevan carpet with Persian characters on a brick-red ground, and concentric central medallions in blue, and blue ground border.

28 ft. 9 in. \times 17 ft. 3 in. .. £200

One of the earliest Gorevans, and, therefore, about sixty years old ; of typical colouring and design, it was a carpet that could not have been mistaken for anything else. Workmanship good for a Gorevan, condition first-rate.

No. 9. A Sehna rug, with pear design on a blue ground, and the Royal Arms and signature of the weaver on the border.

6 ft. 6 in. \times 4 ft. 4 in. .. £210

Knots to the square inch between 700 and 800.

No. 10. A Tabriz rug with arabesque design on red ground with green and white medallion in the centre, and striped red and dark-blue border.

11 ft. 8 in. \times 8 ft. 9 in. .. £115

Not old in the accepted sense of the word, it approximated nevertheless to the standard of the older pieces, especially in the excellent quality of its workmanship. These rugs are

SALE VALUES

amongst the best that have been produced in Persia of recent times, and still maintain a high standard of excellence amidst the general decay.

The great majority of these rugs are modern, and it is comparatively rarely that we encounter a genuine antique or old piece of this type.

No. 11. A Kashan rug with panels of flowers and foliage on red and green ground, and buff and red Border stripes.

10 ft. \times 7 ft. 2 in. £105

This rug had about 500 knots to the square inch, and was an exceedingly fine quality Kashan, though not very old, perhaps forty years at the most.

No. 12. A Shiraz rug with pear design on a dark-blue ground.

7 ft. 6 in. \times 4 ft. 6 in. Late
seventeenth century . . . £78

This was a real antique, but more probably eighteenth than seventeenth century. It was also described in the sale catalogue as a "Mecca" rug, but was really a Shiraz, as most of the so-called Mecca rugs are. This trade term includes all those rugs brought by

PERSIAN RUGS

Pilgrims to Mecca and given to the Priests there, and naturally at times, therefore, embraces rugs of many diverse types.

No. 13. A Kashan rug with trees and birds and a dark-blue central medallion on a buff ground, with pale-green Border.

6 ft. \times 4 ft. 3 in. £50

This piece was not a Kashan at all, but a comparatively modern Kirman. Several such mistakes are to be found in almost every rug catalogue. Quality of workmanship good, condition first-rate.

No. 14. A Shiraz rug with pear ornaments on a dark-blue ground.

3 ft. 6 in. \times 3 ft. 10 in. £13

This piece was a real antique late eighteenth century one would have said. Small, certainly, but a very nice specimen, and cheap at anything under £25.

No. 15. A Feraghan rug with Herati design in old rose-pink and light-blue upon a dark-blue ground. Border stripes green and golden yellow.

6 ft. 3 in. \times 4 ft. 3 in. £12

This was one of the fine old Feraghans

SALE VALUES

that the Persians themselves esteem so highly, but the dealer who sold it did not know this, and considered it "just an old Persian rug," and because it was worn right down to the knot thought £12 a good price to get for it. Exhibiting all the characteristics of its type it was a really excellent collectors' specimen, and could not have been considered dear at £20 or more. In first-rate condition it should have been worth anything up to £40.

No. 16. A Hamadan rug with hexagonal buff and brown panels and striped blue, buff, and brown borders.

12 ft. 5 in. × 4 ft. £50

Hardly a very good catalogue description of a genuine old piece, of a type which is getting scarcer every day. Much of the so-called "buff" was due to the presence of genuine camel's hair, of which the broad outer margin of plain colour was also composed.

No. 17. A Sarabend rug with cones (*i.e.* pears) on a red ground, and green, red, and buff striped border.

10 ft. 2 in. × 5 ft. 2 in. .. £42

This was not an old rug in the true sense

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE XIV

A SARABEND RUG (WITH "PEAR" PATTERN)

This rug has been taken in section to admit of increased size of detail and displays as its most noticeable features an all-over "pear" design of the Field, a "pear" pattern (with angular vine meander) for its principal Border stripe, and a Border of elaborate character and numerous stripes. Our specimen then agrees with what we have learnt, for such are the rugs of Sarabend. It is well to recognise old friends, and, in passing, we might note the well-marked "reciprocal trefoil" design of the outer stripe, and the floral vine meander of the remaining subsidiary stripes.

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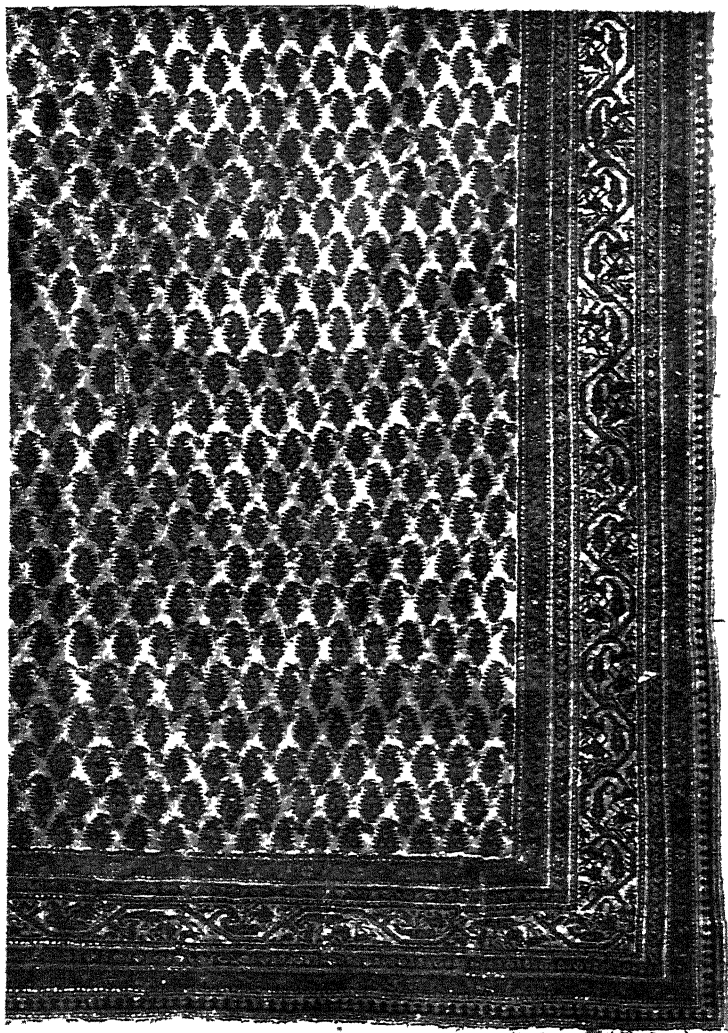


PLATE XIV. A SARABEND RUG (WITH "PEAR" PATTERN).

SALE VALUES

of the word, nor was it hardly a modern, being one of those rugs about fifteen years old, and made after the good old traditions.

No. 18. A "Mecca" rug with foliage on a striped red, blue, green, and buff ground ; or so runs the catalogue description.

6 ft. 7 in. \times 4 ft. 6 in. £57 10s.

Another nice old rug—early nineteenth century—and really a Shiraz. In excellent condition, and a typical specimen of its class, it was certainly good value for the money paid for it.

No. 19. An antique Shirvan rug with a geometrical pear pattern upon a black ground.

6 ft. \times 4 ft. (about) £45

This was a genuine antique certainly (*i.e.* over one hundred years old), but the dealer persisted in calling it a Shiraz, which it was not. These Shirvan rugs of the Caucasus on occasions somewhat resemble Shirazis and are frequently marketed in error as such.

No. 20. A Feraghan rug with Herati design on a dark-blue centre, and blue and buff borders.

11 ft. 5 in. \times 4 ft. 10 in. .. £37

PERSIAN RUGS

Not one of the real old Feraghans this, but hardly a modern for all that, and in first-rate condition.

No. 21. A Bijar rug with intricate design of foliage on dark-blue centre (*i.e.* Field) and red and narrow yellow border.

14 ft. \times 6 ft. 5 in. £60

A very fine old rug, and a real antique either late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, it was cheap at its price and might well have been expected to reach £100.

No. 22. A Sineh (Sehna) rug with cones (pears) and foliage on buff ground and striped red and buff border.

9 ft. 3 in. \times 5 ft. 9 in. .. £110

This was an exceedingly nice specimen of the old Sehna class and exhibited all the characteristics of its type, very fine close weave, and great delicacy and elaborateness of pattern drawing. A choice old piece indeed.

No. 23. A Shiraz rug with conventional flowers and foliage upon a red centre, and with striped red and blue border.

5 ft. 6 in. \times 3 ft. 4 in. .. £14

This was quite an interesting rug to

SALE VALUES

examine, in spite of the fact that its identity was never for a moment in doubt, displaying as it did every one of the characteristic details of finish of its type. The ground was a very rich madder red, and the Field pattern none other than the alternate rosette and bud design illustrated in Fig. 4, p. 85, repeated in rows to form an all-over pattern. So good was the colouring and so fleecy and lustrous the pile that it was only an examination of the back of this specimen that disposed for ever of its claim to at least a respectable degree of antiquity.

Here was displayed, however, a workmanship of the poorest quality, and one which stamped it immediately for what in reality it was, a modern.

Its general appearance was really so excellent that an Oriental merchant would without doubt have ascribed to this piece the age of "300" years, a numeral which seems in high favour with his class.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION OF A RUG

FOR purposes of a practical examination a rug may be considered to be possessed of a front or pile surface, a back surface, and four finishings (namely, those of the sides and the two ends), and the systematic examiner, who makes it a rule to methodically investigate all the details of these, will seldom fail to be rewarded for his thoroughness by much information of interest which would be lost to the more casual observer.

The Front or Pile Surface.—Upon this surface we shall obtain the best impression of the colours and designs of our specimen, and here, too, we shall best be able to investigate the type of the knot employed, whether it be a Ghiordes or a Sehna, and judge also of the quality and treatment of the pile. These,

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

then, are the details to be considered as our rug lies face upwards on the floor.

The Back Surface.—This we shall find the most convenient situation for the study of the weft, since here it is easily discernible as it crosses the rug transversely between each row of knots, whilst here, too, we shall best be able to ascertain the method of warp treatment employed, examine the details of weave (whether coarse, fine, close, or loose), and judge the quality of the workmanship displayed.

The Finishings.—It is the custom for all Persian rugs to be finished at the sides with a simple overcasting or double overcasting, whilst for other groups a two- or three-cord overcasting, or double-overcasting, is the general rule, and this is the sum of the information to be obtained from this investigation; but the finishings of the ends are especially worthy of notice as being the only situations in which the warp threads can be properly studied with regard to material and quality, since these are hidden in the body of the rug, but emerge uncovered in the end webs and fringes.

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The distinctions between the rugs of Persia and those of other groups have already been fully discussed (see Chap. II., pp. 5 to 13), and assuming that our specimen has been proved to be Persian, the following indications may furnish us with valuable clues in regard to its identity.

(a) *Colouring*.—If a rug exhibits tones of light colouring, shades of blue, pink, and ivory, it is almost certainly a Kermanshah, a Meshed, or a 'modern Kirman, whilst if, on the other hand, the colours are dark and sombre, then it is likely to be a Kurdistan or a Kashan. If the ground of the Field is shaded, the piece is probably Kurdish, whilst a preference for brown is strongly indicative of the same authorship.

If a specimen displays shades of purple or magenta it is almost certain to be a Khorassan, whilst a prevalence of rich madder red is particularly suggestive of Niris or Shiraz. If the tones of the reds and blues are particularly clear and rich the piece is likely to be a Shiraz, since no rugs in Persia surpass them for brilliancy and depth of colour in these shades.

Two Persian types, the Gorevan and the

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

Feraghan, are more distinctive than their fellows in their colour schemes, the one with its peculiar shades of apricot, terra-cotta, brick-red, and blue ; and the other with its Herati pattern in old rose-pink upon a dark-blue ground, and with the principal border stripe frequently laid in a light-green ground of a most distinctive shade.

(b) *Patterns*.—If a rug displays an all-over Herati pattern it is particularly likely to be a Feraghan or a Sehna ; if a pear pattern it is probably a Shiraz, Sarabend, Herat, Khorassan, or Sehna ; if a Henna flower design a Feraghan ; or if the “ Mina Khani ” it is almost certainly a Kurdish piece.

If geometrical or adventitious designs appear, or the pear is geometrical in shape, the specimen is unlikely to be other than a Shiraz, Karadagh, Mosul, or Hamadan, whilst diaper and lattice work patterns are particularly suggestive of a Kurdish origin.

If a rug displays concentric medallions it is almost certainly a Gorevan, if a central medallion with pendants, it is likely to be a Kashan, modern Kirman, or Kermanshah ; if

PERSIAN RUGS

PLATE XV

A KIRMAN RUG

In all Persia no rugs were truer to type, or more distinctive, than the old Kirmans, with their gorgeous display of red roses. The photograph is not as clear as one would like, but, nevertheless, as the eye becomes accustomed to it, one can quite easily distinguish the bunches of roses that form the Field pattern of the rug, and the outlines even of the separate flowers with their shaded petals and beautiful, natural drawing.

Alas! that the weavers of later days should follow such traditions no more.

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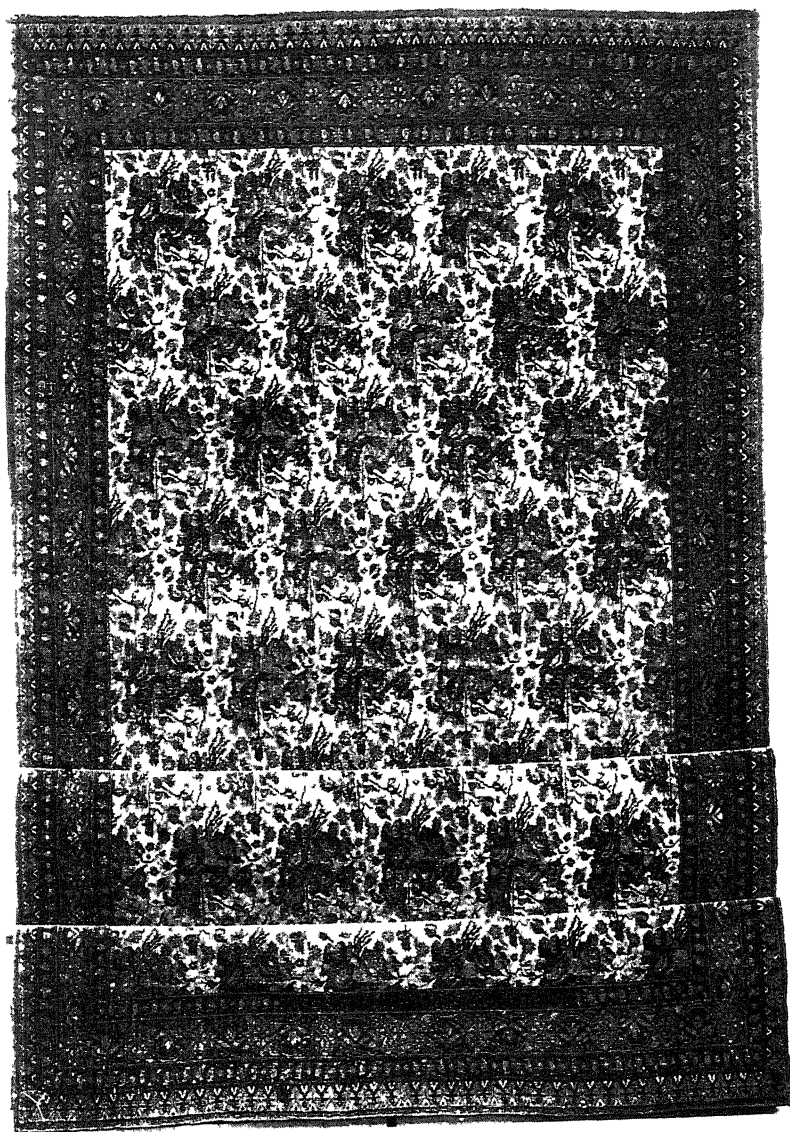


PLATE XV. A KIRMAN RUG.

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

a chain medallion, it is probably a Shiraz, or Hamadan.

(c) *The Knot*.—This will be either a Ghiordes or a Sehna, and by a decision of this one simple fact the total unwieldy mass of Persian rugs is immediately divided into two nearly equal halves, and the field of our search accordingly proportionately narrowed (see p. 37, Chap. IV.).

(d) *The Pile*.—If a rug displays a notably close trimmed and velvety pile it is probably a Kashan, Sarouk, or Sehna; if short and harsh to the touch it is likely to be a Tabriz; if long, a Mosul or Kurdish; if unevenly trimmed a Khorassan. If the pile is largely composed of camel's hair the piece is almost certainly a Hamadan, or rarely, an old Mosul, or Bijar. If it is of medium length and notably soft and fleecy our specimen is particularly likely to be a Shiraz, or Niris.

In order to examine the back surface we shall now proceed to turn our specimen over face downwards, and in so doing should particularly notice whether it be thick or thin, flexible or stiff.

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If the rug is notably thin it is probably a Sehna, since these are the thinnest of all Persian rugs, and can often be recognised by experts by this fact alone; whilst if it is unusually thick and heavy it is likely to be a Bijar, Mosul, or Kurdistan.

If it is stiff it is certain to be modern, however much it may resemble an old rug in other ways, but if it is limp and flexible it may be either a genuine old piece or a modern which has been subjected to special treatment so as to cause it to resemble one.

The Weft.—If our specimen displays a weft which crosses but once between each row of knots, then it is either a Sehna, a Hamadan, a Mosul, or a Kurdistan, the weft being of fine cotton in the case of a Sehna, coarse cotton in the case of a Hamadan, and wool for a Mosul or Kurdistan. If it displays a weft which varies in the number of its crossing at intervals, it is certainly a Herat, or Khorassan.

The Warp.—If the rug has all the warp threads level, *i.e.* equally prominent on the back surface, then it is either a Feraghan, Hamadan, Joshaghan, Karadagh, Kurdistan,

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

Mosul, Sehna, or Shiraz. If alternate warp threads are depressed, then it is probably a Gorevan, Niris, or Joshaghan, or rarely a Kurdistan.

If the specimen displays a warp of cotton, the piece is either a Meshed, Sarabend, Kashan, Sarouk, Sehna, Tabriz, Feraghan, Gorevan, Kirman, Kermanshah, Khorassan, Herat, or Joshaghan, whilst if it displays a warp of wool it may be either a Bijar, Karadagh, Herat (generally cotton), Joshaghan (usually cotton), Kurdistan (rarely cotton), Niris, Mosul (rarely cotton), or Shiraz.

Finishings.—If the sides are finished with a double overcasting in short lengths of different coloured wools, the appearance produced somewhat resembling a barber's pole, then the rug is certainly a Shiraz or Niris, whilst if small tufts of wool project at intervals from the sides, then this identification is absolutely confirmed. If the rug shows coloured end webs, then it is a Shiraz, or Niris, or more rarely a Kurdistan, or Gorevan.

CONCLUSION

THE author has aimed at producing a work that might actually serve as a practical guide to the Collector of to-day in his collecting, and has purposely omitted details which would not be of real assistance to him. To the Collector, modern rugs are of little interest, and about them, therefore, only sufficient has been said, to enable him to discriminate between these and the old pieces that he covets.

A consideration of the Persian masterpieces of the seventeenth century and earlier, has also been omitted, for the reason that these lie outside the scope of the collecting power of our readers, and to-day are only to be met with in museums and collections of national importance. These pieces represent such types as the antique Animal or Hunting Carpets, Garden Carpets, Compartment Carpets, and Flower Carpets (amongst which is the famous

CONCLUSION

Ardebil carpet now in the South Kensington Museum), and should our readers desire to learn more concerning these they could not possibly do better than consult the chapter on Early Rug Weaving in Mr. Walter Hawley's most exquisite and fascinating book, "Oriental Rugs," published by John Lane & Co., of New York (£2 2s.). Concerning these specimens, no one with any real general knowledge of Persian rugs would fail to recognise them at least as something better even than the best he knew, of this we need have little fear if by any chance we were to encounter one, or a fragment of one, in some remote corner of the East. Silk rugs also have not been discussed at length, since these are exceptional productions, and not the general rule for any district, although perhaps a larger proportion are produced around Kashan than elsewhere in Persia. The majority are modern, but some are genuine antiques, and to judge between them we must apply the usual standards of comparison with especial reference to the quality of the colouring and the pattern drawing.

PERSIAN RUGS

Upon no branch of collecting to-day is the general public worse informed or more poorly provided with the means of acquiring information, whilst those who really understand the study of Persian rugs are indeed few, so that this field provides to-day perhaps the happiest of remaining hunting grounds for the connoisseur who likes to combine his pleasures with a profit, and for the Collector, who reckons amongst his chiefest treasures, those "bargains" and "finds" which form tangible evidence of the soundness of his judgment and are the measure of his initiative and ability.

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THE END

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